

**ENGLISH
ESSAYS & COMPOSITION
FOR
COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS**

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**PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR
106/B, SOUTH SINTHER ROAD,
CALCUTTA—700096
Price Rs. 5'00**

PREFACE

It is a comprehensive guide book for the English Papers in various Competitive and Service Examinations and will meet the long-felt need of the candidates for such a compilation.

The previous edition of this guide book received great appreciation from the examinees. The present edition has been thoroughly revised with many new additions so that it may serve as the most up-to-date and valuable handbook for Service Examinations.

The essays and composition work dealt with here were set in the W.B.C.S. Examination, I.A.S. Examination, Miscellaneous Services Recruitment Examination and the Secretariat Clerkship Examination during the last twenty years or more. Chapter I contains as many as 200 essays of the standard of such Service Examinations. Chapters II to VII deal with the Composition Paper and include Letters to the Editor and other Letters, Stories, Dialogues and Debates, Appreciation of poems, Amplifications and Short Notes on various topics. The examinees will undoubtedly get in it a comprehensive book for their preparation in respect of English Papers of those Competitive Examinations. Chapter VIII dealing with Amplifications and Short Notes will also serve as a guide for the General Knowledge Paper. 23, 554

The author acknowledges his debt to many of his friends who helped in more than one way and apologises for any error that might have crept into this book due to hurried printing. 26, 2.74

B. Samyal

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I—ENGLISH ESSAYS

(a) Topics in Question-form

	Pages
1. Are we better than our forefathers ? (WBCS '49)	1—2
2. "Those who admire modern civilization usually identify it with the steam engine and the electric telegraph"—Write an essay, giving your views on the salient points of modern civilization (WBCS'56) Or, The contribution of Science to Culture (IAS '67)	2—4
3. "Art should never be didactic" and "It should never be anything else"—Discuss these views and show which of these is acceptable to you ? (WBCS '56)	4—6
4. "Only a leisured class can afford to devote itself to art and learning ; therefore a classless society will necessarily be the enemy of both"—Discuss this statement and give your own conclusion (WBCS '57)	6—7
5. Should literature and the arts be patronised by the State ? (WBCS '68, IAS '73)	8—9
6. Does the artist have a moral obligation to Society ? (WBCS '69, '73)	9—11
7. Objective Knowledge and Subjective Knowledge (WBCS '58)	11—13
8. "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind"—Discuss this statement (WBCS '57)	13—15
9. "We need more of philosophy and less of science in the modern world" (WBCS '65)	15—16
10. Do you think the worship of Science will destroy all the traditional values in India ? (WBCS '66, IAS '63)	16—17
11. If the National Library were on fire and only six books could be saved from it, which six should be chosen and why ? (WBCS '65)	17—19
12. Which character in history or fiction would you like to meet and why ?	

Or, Which character in English or Bengali fiction would you like to meet and why ?

- (i) Character in English fiction (*Heathcliff*) 19—20
- (ii) Character in Bengali fiction (*Indranath*) 20—21
(WBCS '64, '66)
13. What writer now dead would you like to see alive today and why ? (WBCS '67) 21—23
14. If you were made Prime Minister of India, what would be the first reform you would introduce and why ? (WBCS '65) 23—24
15. If I were the dictator of India . ? (WBCS '74) 24—25
16. In what circumstances can civil liberties be justifiably suppressed by the State (WBCS '69) 26—27
17. Is the pen mightier than the sword ? (WBCS '72) 27—28
18. Should vast sums of money be spent on Space exploration ? (WBCS '72) 29—30
19. Has the foreign policy of India been effective ? (WBCS '72) 30—32
20. Should a developing country maintain neutrality in foreign policy ? (WBCS '75) 32—34
21. Are films a good means of education ? (WBCS '72) 34—35
22. Does international competition in sport foster goodwill among nations ? (WBCS '73) 35—37
23. Has advertising become a menace in our daily life ? (WBCS '73) 37—39
24. Should capital punishment be abolished ? (IAS '65, WBCS '73) 39—41
25. Should men and women compete in the same fields of employment ? (WBCS '67, '74)
Or, Changing patterns of women's employment in India (IAS '76) 41—42
26. Would you like to be a District Magistrate or a Member of the State Planning Board ? (WBCS '74) 42—44
27. Who has benefitted mankind more—
(i) the statesman or the scientist ? (WBCS '73) 44—46
(ii) a poet or a politician ? (WBCS '74) 46—47

	Pages
(iii) the postman or the policeman ? (WBCS '75)	47—49
28. Which is more difficult to learn—Mathematics or a foreign language ? And which is more interesting ? (WBCS '74)	49—50
29. In what circumstances do you think that police or troops are justified in firing a mob ? (WBCS '67)	50—52
30. Can the public and the private sectors be simultaneously encouraged in a socialist economy ? (WBCS '75)	52—54
31. Which is more important—technology or sociology ? (WBCS '76)	54—55
32. Which is preferable for a humane city life—to have tidy streets or to allow a place on them for hawkers to make a living ? (WBCS '76)	55—57
33. What is the more important consideration in industrial management—maximisation of production or consideration of the workers' safety and welfare ? (WBCS '76)	57—59
34. Should all education be employment-oriented or should there be room to explore subjects for their own sake ? (WBCS '76)	59—61

(b) LITERARY AND EDUCATIONAL TOPICS

35. Literary creation and criticism (WBCS '51)	61—62
36. Limits of Realism in Literature (WBCS '52, IAS '60)	62—64
37. The Novel as the Modern Epic (WBCS '66)	64—65
38. Poetry in the modern world (WBCS '67)	65—67
39. The education you would like to have if you could choose ? (Misc '67)	67—68
40. Choice of six books as company in confinement (WBCS '64)	68—69
41. The three-language formula (WBCS '66, '67, '68)	70—71
42. The importance of English as a language of international culture (WBCS '73)	71—73

	Pages
43. In our schools and colleges, there is too much stress laid on teaching and too little on active learning (WBCS '63)	73—74
44. Feelings of an examinee waiting outside (WBCS '65)	74—75
46. Should all examinations be abolished ? (WBCS '70, '76, IAS '76)	75—77
46. Literature and Society (WBCS '72) Or, Has literature a social role ? (WBCS '76)	77—79
47. Literature and national life (WBCS '74)	79—80
48. Your favourite author (Misc '72)	81
49. The usefulness of Reading (CL '74)	81—83
50. The problems facing primary education today (Misc '75)	83—84
51. The prospects of an educated young man in India today (WBCS '72)	84—85
52. The present system of education and its defects (CL '75)	85—87
53. The possibilities of the 10+2+3 educational system (Misc '76)	87—88

(c) TOPICS ON HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

54. History repeats itself (Misc '68)	88—89
55. "History repeats itself" and "The unexpected always happens"—Which of the above sayings is supported by your study of Indian History ? (WBCS '56, IAS '49, '66)	89—91
56. "The Dust Heap that is History" (WBCS '58)	91—93
57. History is past politics and politics present history (WBCS '62)	93—94
58. In which period of history and in which country would you like to have lived ? (WBCS '68)	94—96
59. "When nations grow old, the arts grow cold" (WBCS '55)	96—97
60. Glorification of the Past (WBCS '60)	97—98
61. The movement of the world is crab-like (WBCS '65)	99—100

	Pages
62. The cult of personality (WBCS '58, IAS '63)	100—102
63. The cult of the individual (WBCS '65)	102—103
64. On writing the history of India (WBCS '76)	103—105
65. The life and deeds of an Indian Hero (Misc '68)	105—106

(d) TOPICS ON SCIENCE

66. Humanistic studies <i>versus</i> Science (WBCS '69)	106—107
67. Science and Internationalism (WBCS '51)	107—108
68. The social function of science (WBCS '53)	108—110
69. The effects of scientific research on social life (CL '52)	110—111
70. Science and Society (WBCS '58, IAS '61)	112—113
71. Scientific probe of simple things (WBCS '60)	113—115
72. Limitations of science (WBCS '61, IAS '54) <i>Or, Science is not enough (IAS '64)</i>	115—116
73. The scientific invention the world needs most today (WBCS '64)	117—118
74. The wonders of modern science (Misc '68)	118—119
75. Prospects of Space travel (WBCS '59, '67, IAS '67, Misc '76)	119—120
76. What arguments can be offered for and against the possibility of life on other Planets (WBCS '68)	120—121
77. Science in the modern world (WBCS '52, '70)	122—123
78. The contribution of science to the modern out- look on life (IAS '67, WBCS '73)	123—125
79. The essential knowledge of science and technology for the common man in everyday life (WBCS '74)	125—127

(e) TOPICS ON RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

80. The conflicts of ideals in modern India (WBCS '53)	127—129
81. Religion belongs to an early stage of human development (WBCS '61)	

	Pages
<i>Or Religion is the opiate of people</i> (IAS '65)	129—130
82. Is religion a bar to progress ? (WBCS '74)	130—132
83. Where science ends, philosophy begins (WBCS '64)	132—133
84. Ends and Means (WBCS '66)	
<i>Or, Does the end justify the means ?</i> (WBCS '70)	133—135
85. Knowledge and Wisdom (WBCS '67)	
<i>Or, 'Wisdom denotes the pursuing of the best ends by the best means'</i> (IAS '68)	135—136
86. Religion is the rule of life, not a casual incident in it (WBCS '72)	136—138
87. The difference between Religion and Superstition (WBCS '73, Misc '75)	138—140
88. True sympathy is more than a feeling (WBCS '76)	140—141

(f) SOCIAL TOPICS

89. "The world does not progress, it only changes" (WBCS '52, IAS '55)	142—143
90. "The old order changeth, yielding place to new" (WBCS '50, Misc '68)	143
91. "The golden age which a blind tradition has hitherto placed in the past is Before us" (WBCS '53)	143—145
92. Tradition (WBCS '59)	145—146
93. How far should traditions be maintained in modern society ? (WBCS '76, IAS '75)	146—148
94. Your conception of the Good Life (CL '51)	148—149
95. Service before Self (WBCS '55)	149—151
96. Folk art in Bengal (WBCS '68, CL '56)	
<i>Or, Folk arts in India</i> (IAS '74)	151—152
97. Folk Tales of Bengal (WBCS '63)	
<i>Or, Indian folk-tales</i> (IAS '63)	153—154
98. Legends, folk-lore and mythology (WBCS '74)	154—156

	Pages
99. Indian outlook on life and its manifestation in social and political institutions (WBCS '51)	156—157
100. Man and Society (WBCS '58, IAS '60)	157—158
101. The main currents of twentieth century thought (WBCS '64, IAS '67)	158—159
102. Our Changing World (CL '64)	160—161
103. Cultural Domination (WBCS '51, IAS '58)	161—162
104. Cultural activities in villages (Misc '72)	162—163
105. The problems of beggars in towns and cities (Misc '72)	163—164
106. The Cinema as a portrait of life (WBCS '73)	164—166
107. The effects of the cinema on the young (Misc '75)	166
108. Should social service be made compulsory for students ? (Misc '74)	167
109. Dress and food-habits of people in Bengal (Misc '74)	168
110. The importance of discipline in social life (Misc '75)	168—169
(g) ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL TOPICS	
111. The Indian Agricultural Problem (CL '50)	169—171
112. The Problems of the Indian villages and their solution (CL '52, '63)	171—173
113. Life in a West Bengal Village today (WBCS '69)	173—175
114. Urbanization in West Bengal (WBCS '61)	175—176
115. The modernisation of rural areas (WBCS '76)	176—178
116. "Back to the village" (Misc '75)	178—179
117. The Problem of industrialisation in India (CL '51)	179—181
118. Rationalization of Industry (WBCS '60)	181—183
119. Rise in the standard of life and its implications (WBCS '51)	183—184
120. Rise in the cost of living and its consequences (Misc '67)	184—186
121. Family Planning in India (WBCS '65, '70) Or, Family Planning among different classes in society (WBCS '75)	186—187

	Pages
122. Unemployment (CL '53, '73, Misc '72) Or, The acute unemployment problem in your State (WBCS '73)	187—189
123. Commercial Education—its cultural and practical value (WBCS '73)	189—191
124. Scope of expansion of India's foreign trade (WBCS '75)	191—193
125. The importance of small-scale industry (WBCS '76)	193—195

(h) POLITICAL TOPICS

126. Internationalism—Fact or Fiction? (WBCS '62)	195—196
127. Patriotism and Internationalism (IAS '58, '74, Misc '74)	196—197
128. Nationalism and Internationalism (WBCS '74)	197—199
129. Democracy (WBCS '67, IAS '68) Or, The true role of political parties in a democracy (IAS '59)	199—200
130. Has democracy been successful in India? (WBCS '69, IAS '50, '72, Misc '72)	200—202
131. The ideal democratic society (WBCS '73)	202—204
132. Leadership in a Democracy (WBCS '62, IAS '60)	204—205
133. Public Life in India (WBCS '51)	205—207
134. The Ideals of Public Service (WBCS '53)	207—208
135. "No Government can be long secure without a formidable opposition" (WBCS '52)	209—210
136. The Virtues and Vices of a bureaucratic Government (WBCS '66)	210—212
137. The Welfare State (WBCS '69, IAS '50)	21—
138. The Role of the Government in a Modern State (CL '53)	213—215
139. "The growing ills of our country are to be traced principally to the increasing centralisation of powers (WBCS '59)	215—216
140. Independence of the Judiciary (WBCS '51, IAS '73)	217—218

	Pages
141. Bad Laws are the worst sort of tyranny (WBCS '53)	218—220
142. Law is a condition of Liberty (WBCS '61, IAS '63) <i>Or</i> , 'Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains' (IAS '59)	220—221
143. "The Law is good if a man uses it lawfully" (WBCS '65)	221—222
144. "If you would have peace, prepare for war" (WBCS '52) <i>Or</i> , Preparedness for war is the best security of peace (IAS '72, CL '63)	222—224
145. Prospects of a Third World War (WBCS '66)	224—226
146. Problems of Peace (WBCS '66)	226—227
147. War (WBCS '67) <i>Or</i> , The effects of war on civilization (WBCS '72)	227—229
148. Problems of Student unrest in our country (WBCS '60, '67, '69, IAS '69, Misc '68, CL '67, '73)	229—231
149. The role of students in Modern India (CL '72)	231—232
150. Should students take part in politics ? (IAS '70, Misc '75)	232—233
151. Hate Politics (WBCS '70)	233—235
152. Parliamentary Government—its advantages and disadvantages (WBCS '72, IAS '62, '75)	235—237
153. Use and abuse of Nuclear Power (WBCS '63, '66, Misc '74, IAS '51)	237—238
154. India's achievements in nuclear and space sciences (WBCS '75)	238—239
155. The Press in Free India (WBCS '49)	239—241
156. The duties and responsibilities of a Journalist (WBCS '73, Misc '72)	241—243
157. The Role of the Newspaper in Modern India (CL '53, '67) <i>Or</i> , The power of the Press (WBCS '72)	243—244
158. Censorship (WBCS '69)	244—246
159. The heritage of India's struggle for freedom (Misc '76)	246—247

	Pages
160. The rights and duties of the youth in modern India	(Misc '76) 247—248
:(i) MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS	
161. "To thine ownself be true" (WBCS '50) <i>Or, "Know then thyself presume not God to scan.</i> <i>The proper study of mankind is man"</i>	(IAS '64) 248—249
162. "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control— These three alone lead life to sovereign power"	(WBCS '50) 249—250
163. Nothing could be more destructive of character or warping to vitality than a long course of abnegation and sacrifice (WBCS '60)	250—252
164. Time (WBCS '57, IAS '73)	252—253
165. Greatness consists in bringing all manner of mischief upon mankind and Goodness in removing it from them (WBCS '61)	253—255
166. "Great wits are sure to madness near allied" (WBCS '65)	255—256
167. As civilization advances poetry declines (WBCS '53, '62, '66, IAS '67)	256—258
168. Art for art's sake (WBCS '66)	258—259
169. "To commercialize art is to debase it"—Discuss (WBCS '56)	259—260
170. The importance of trifles (WBCS '64)	261—262
171. On being modern-minded (WBCS '68, IAS '63)	262—263
172. "What is this life, if full of care, We have no time to stand and stare !" (WBCS '68, IAS '50) <i>Or, Enjoying one's leisure (IAS '69)</i>	263—265
173. Work and Leisure (WBCS '67)	265—266
174. The improvements in facilities for travel have not been an unmixed blessing (WBCS '64)	266—267
175. Different kinds of transport (WBCS '65, '74)	268—269
176. Travel as a part of education (CL '53)	269—271

	Pages
177. Tourism (Misc '72)	271—272
178. Your experience of unpleasant incidents in over-crowded trams and buses (Misc '68)	272—273
179. A rainy day at home (WBCS '64)	273—274
180. Your proposals for the improvement of railway travel (Misc '75)	274—275
181. A ride in a bus in Calcutta (WBCS '64)	275—276
182. The common Man's lot in Calcutta today (WBCS '68)	276—277
183. Cities—blessing or curse ? (WBCS '67)	277—279
184. Life in the twenty-first century (Misc '68, WBCS '76)	279—281
185. The misfortunes of an unusually tall man (WBCS '60)	281—282
186. Advantages and disadvantages of being young (WBCS '75)	
Or. Today's rebellious youth (IAS '73)	282—283
187. The advantages and disadvantages of being born rich (WBCS '64)	283—285
188. "Glory is like a circle in the water" (WBCS '65)	285—286
189. Every great movement comes to an end with the birth of its founder (WBCS '69)	286—287
190. Colours and sounds in Nature (WBCS '74)	287—289
191. Climate and national character (WBCS '74)	289—291
192. India ; a unity in diversity (IAS '69, Misc '74)	291—292
193. On keeping dogs, cats, birds and other pets (WBCS '75)	292—293
194. Requirements for a happy life (WBCS '75)	293—295
195. On gossiping (WBCS '75)	295—296
196. Brevity is the soul of wit (WBCS '75)	296—298
197. Greater Calcutta (Misc '76)	298—299
198. Street names (Misc '76)	299—300
199. Old and new energy-sources (WBCS '76)	300—302
200. The art of friendship (WBCS '76, IAS '75)	302—303

ENGLISH COMPOSITION
CHAPTER II—LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF A DAILY
NEWSPAPER

	Pages
1. A letter commenting on student unrest in west Bengal and suggesting ways and means for handling of the situation (WBCS '68, CL '68, '66)	1—2
2. A letter narrating your experiences as a victim in a major railway accident and adding your comments (WBCS '62)	2—3
3. A letter commenting on frequent traffic dislocation due to processions etc. and giving suggestions for improvement (WBCS '67)	4
4. A letter about the difficulties of railway travel in our country and suggestions for improvement (CL '55, '67)	5—6
5. A letter pleading for the introduction of compulsory military training for students in India (CL '60)	6—7
6. A letter complaining of the bad quality and inadequate supply of drinking water in your locality (Misc '67, '74)	8—9
7. A letter commenting on the present state of hospitals in West Bengal and suggesting improvements (WBCS '70)	9
8. A letter about the frequent failure of electric supply in the locality (Misc '72)	10—11
9. A letter commenting on the programmes of All India Radio and suggesting improvements (WBCS '72)	11
10. A letter commenting on the present crisis in education in Indian universities (WBCS '73)	12
11. A letter commenting on Tourism in India (WBCS '74)	12—13
12. A letter on the division and dissention in public life which are a sad commentary on our national character and our national integrity (WBCS '76)	13—14

	Pages
13. A letter on the desirability or otherwise of the new Higher Secondary Course (Class XI and-XII) in West Bengal (WBCS '76)	14—15
14. A letter discussing the transport problem that the common man has to face daily (CL '75)	15—17
15. A letter about the problem of street-begging in Calcutta (Misc '75)	17—18
16. A letter describing the inconveniences experienced by the people due to badly damaged unrepaired roads of the city (CL '76)	18—19

CHAPTER III—OTHER LETTERS

1. A letter to a friend giving an account of Literary Conference which you attended (WBCS '60)	20—21
2. A letter to a friend describing—	
(i) a visit to a zoo (Misc '67)	21—22
(ii) a visit to a Museum (Misc '67)	22—23
(iii) a visit to a Circus Show (Misc '67)	23—24
3. A letter to younger brother instructing him to join the National Cadet Corps in his College (Misc '68)	24—25
4. A letter to your father telling him why you have offered yourself as a candidate for the present examination (Misc '68)	26—27
5. A letter to a friend describing some notable event in your life (Misc '72, '75)	27—28
6. A letter to your younger brother on the value of discipline in academic life (Misc '72)	28—29
7. A letter to a friend describing a picture or play which you have recently seen and liked (Misc '74)	29—30
8. A letter to your sister about the desirability or otherwise of co-education (Misc '75)	30—31
9. A letter to a friend suggesting useful and enjoyable ways of spending a long vacation at home (Misc '76)	31—32

CHAPTER IV—STORIES & BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

	Pages
1. An imaginary biographical sketch or short story illustrating the type of character as revealed in the remark "You couldn't say she'd had a hard life exactly, because she didn't make a hardship of it" (WBCS '57)	33—35
2. A character sketch of "a dunce" or a short story with "a dunce" for its hero (WBCS '59)	35—36
3. A pen picture of your experiences of a miie's imaginary walk along any well-known street of Calcutta in the evening (WBCS '59)	36—37
4. Describe "An Encounter with a Yeti" (WBCS '60)	37—39
5. Story of your own life—past, present and future (A glimpse of my life) (CL '61)	39—40
6. A biographical sketch of Swami Vivekananda (CL '63)	40—41
7. A story of an English sailor setting birds free from a cage (A story of deep love for liberty) (CL '66)	41—42

CHAPTER V—DEBATE, DIALOGUE, DRAMATIC SCENE, REPORT ETC.

1. A dialogue between a Pacifist and a War-monger (WBCS '50)	43—44
2. An imaginary conversation between a pacifist urging a ban on nuclear weapons and a politician who favours the making of such weapons as a deterrent that will prevent a world war (WBCS '61)	44—46
3. A dialogue between two persons, one supporting and the other opposing the abolition of the death sentence (WBCS '57, IAS '65)	46—47
4. A short dramatic scene in which a poor peasant is almost forced to accept the money-lender's terms of high interest for a loan when another villager	

	Pages
rescues him by offering a loan on easy terms from the village co-operative society (WBCS '58)	47—49
5. An imaginary symposium on "The East is East and the West is West, and yet the Twain can meet" (WBCS '59, IAS '59)	49—50
6. A short account of a debate on the following motion at a meeting of your College Union —	
(i) "That in the opinion of the House the Modern trend of science is a danger to humanity" (WBCS '60)	50—51
(ii) "That sportsmen are better ambassadors of amity between nations than cultural delegations" (WBCS '62)	51—53
(iii) "What the country needs at the present moment is not <i>more</i> graduates but <i>better</i> graduates" (WBCS '64)	53—54
(iv) "That the principle, 'My country, right or wrong' holds good in all cases" (WBCS '63)	54—55
7. A defence of your own times in reply to an elderly person quoting the words "Those were the days" (= The past and the present) (WBCS '64)	55—57
8. Write one speech for and one against the motion that—	
(i) "Progress is a delusion" (WBCS '66)	57—58
(ii) "Agriculture rather than Big Industry is what India needs today" (WBCS '65)	58—59
(iii) "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel" (WBCS '67, IAS '67)	59
(iv) "Love and gun-powder are the worst inventions of Man" (WBCS '68)	59—60
(v) "Govt. employees cannot have the right to go on strike for the redress of their grievances" (WBCS '69)	60—61
(vi) "The conquest of poverty would be greater and more desirable achievement than the conquest of the moon" (WBCS '70)	61—62
(vii) "Intellectuals would make a better job of	

	Pages
ruling the world than politicians" (WBCS '72)	62
(viii) "Patriotism is not enough" (WBCS '73, IAS '58)	62—63
(ix) "Women are more intelligent than men" (WBCS '74)	63
(x) "Today Man is not in need of more power : he needs more idealism" (WBCS '75)	64
9. A dialogue between two friends discussing—	
(i) the importance of having a good knowledge of English (Misc '68, WBCS '73)	65
(ii) The prospect of a certain candidate in the election to their College Union to be held shortly (Misc '72)	66 - 67
(iii) Whether people had a happier life today than they had a hundred years ago (Misc '76)	67—68
10. A dialogue between two friends discussing an exciting football match which they have just witnessed (Misc '68)	68
11. A dialogue between two persons discussing the problem of water-logging in the streets of Calcutta during the rainy season (Misc '68, '75)	69
12. A dialogue between two pedestrians discussing the encroachment on pavements by stall-holders (Misc '72)	70—71
13. A dialogue between two citizens discussing the project of underground Railways in Calcutta (Misc '74)	71—72
14. A dialogue on "Which is more interesting— Astronomy or Life Science ?" (WBCS '75)	72—74
15. A dialogue on "Which is more popular—fiction or cinema ? And which is the greater art ?" (WBCS '75)	74—76
16. A dialogue between two students discussing the problem of cheating in examinations (Misc '75)	76

	Pages
17. A dialogue between two men discussing the current phenomenon of world-wide inflation and its pressure on the economy of India (Misc '75)	77
18. A dialogue between a boy from the city and a boy from the countryside on city-life vs country life—environment and way of living (Misc '76)	78

CHAPTER VI—CRITICISM AND APPRECIATION OF POETIC PASSAGES

1. "This is the state of man" . (WBCS '60)	79—80
2. "One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee" (WBCS '61)	80—81
3. "My little son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes" (WBCS '65)	81—83
4. "The fat men go about the streets" (Ballade of the Poetic Life) (WBCS '66, IAS '59)	83—85
5. The Images of Death "The hawk, the furred eagle, the smooth panther" (WBCS '67)	85—86
6. The Gift of India "Is there aught you need that my hands withhold" (WBCS '63, '69)	86—88
7. "Be with me, Beauty, for the fire is dying" (WBCS '70)	88—89
8. "O Solitude ! If I must with thee dwell" (WBCS '72)	89—90
9. "I met a traveller from an antique land" (Story of King Ozymandias of Egypt) (WBCS '73)	90—91
10. "The lost days of my life until today" (WBCS '74)	91- 92

	Pages
11. The Choice—D.G. Rossetti "Think thou and act ; tomorrow thou shalt die" (WBCS '75)	92—93
12. "There is a silence where hath been no sound" (WBCS '76)	93—94

CHAPTER VII--AMPLIFICATIONS, WRITING SHORT NOTES ETC.

- | | | | |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|
| 1. | Amplify the idea contained in the following— | | |
| (i) | A stitch in time saves nine (Misc '67) | | 94—95 |
| (ii) | The pen is mightier than the sword | (Misc '67, '72) | 95 |
| (iii) | Example is better than precept (Misc '67) | | 95—96 |
| (iv) | "Handsome is that handsome does" (Misc '68) | | 96 |
| (v) | He prayeth best who loveth best,
All things, both great and small" (Misc '68) | | 96—97 |
| (vi) | "Authority causes some men to grow, others to swell". How it reflects on the Civil Servants in India ? | (WBCS '56) | 97—98 |
| (vii) | "The two great inventions of the human mind are writing and money—the common language of intelligence and the common language of self-interest" (WBCS '56) | | 98 |
| (viii) | To enjoy liberty we must control ourselves | (Misc '72) | 98—99 |
| (ix) | Our antagonist is our helper (Misc '72) | | 99 |
| 2. | Amplify the idea contained in— | | |
| (i) | If God came to me with Truth in one hand and search for Truth in the other, I should choose the latter | (Misc '74) | 100 |
| (ii) | The greatest of all faults is to be conscious of none | (Misc '74) | 101 |
| (iii) | Man does not live by bread alone | (Misc '74) | 101—102 |

	Pages
(iv) Cowards die many times before their death (Misc '75)	102
(v) Revenge is a kind of wild justice (IAS '63, Misc '75)	102
(vi) Variety is the spice of life (Misc '75)	103
(vii) One man's meat is another man's poison (IAS '67, Misc '76)	103
(viii) Two wrongs do not make a right (Misc '76)	104
(ix) The paths of glory lead but to the grave (Misc '76)	104
3. Do you think it essential for India to have a national language ? Justify or criticize the efforts of the Govt. of India to make Hindi the national language of the country (Misc '67)	105—106
4. "Researches in Fundamental Sciences should be given preference to those in Applied Sciences"—Do you agree ? (WBCS '56)	106—107
5. The new sources of atomic energy offer so many opportunities for advance that we are now facing a new era in Chemistry and Biology"—Explain and illustrate. What are the other uses of Atomic energy for peaceful purposes (WBCS '53, '56)	107—108
6. What is the relation between population growth and poverty ? (WBCS '58, '72, Misc '74)	108—109
7. All Indian scientists should be brought back (WBCS '69)	109—110
8. What wonders and treasures does the sea hold for us in her depths (CL '56)	110—111
9. What is meant by 'automation' ? Discuss the problem of introducing automation in India (Misc '68)	111—112
10. What is Tourism ? How will you promote it ? (WBCS '57, CL '67)	112—113
11. Transport problem in Calcutta (WBCS '60, CL '63, '67, Misc '68)	113—114

	Pages
12. What do you understand by Green Revolution ? (Misc '72, CL '73)	114—115
13. What are your suggestions for accelerating rural development in India (Misc '72)	115—116
14. In what respects has the position of women changed in India since independence (WBCS '75)	116
15. What do you understand by the concept of 'mixed economy' ? Give your arguments for and against its application in Indian economy (WBCS '75)	116—117
16. What is a 'question bank' ? Discuss its necessity as well as its method of working in the field of reform of examination system (WBCS '75)	117—118
17. Elucidate Gandhiji's views on—(a) Non- violence and (b) Education (CL '75)	118—119
18. What are Gandhiji's views on Untouchability ? What measures have been taken by the Govt. to eradicate untouchability ? (WBCS '76)	119—120

Chapter 1

ENGLISH ESSAYS

CHAPTER I—ENGLISH ESSAYS.

(a) TOPICS IN QUESTION-FORM

1. Are we better than our forefathers ? (WBCS '49)

It is true that the world is gradually progressing to a happier and better goal, though there is much controversy about the interpretation of happiness. In the words of Tennyson—

“Through the ages one increasing purpose runs
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process
of the suns”.

This upholds the optimistic view that the world is slowly but surely progressing towards a final consummation. The wonderful discoveries of science have made human life comfortable in many respects, and have vested immense power in the hands of man. Science has made a notable contribution in the fields of medicine, surgery, agriculture, education and the like and thus we are much advanced than our forefathers. But the ideal of plain living and high thinking of the old society has died out. Religion is no longer a vital force. The social tie is vanishing and we are becoming selfish and self-centered men. Mechanical civilization has brought in good many wants that were unknown in former times. Science has undoubtedly improved the conditions of man but not the man himself and thus the real happiness, which is the product of mental and moral uplift, is wanting. We do not care to think of spiritual upliftment ; but we are awfully busy with our daily needs and artificial wants. If our forefathers were at the mercy of feudal lords, we are today the victims of impersonal forces of science, industrial civilization and higher standards of living. We have already cast aside, in favour of new ones, the old patterns of morals, manners and customs, the out-worn systems of politics economics and even religion. It cannot be said that all these changes are changes for the better. The recent developments of science towards preparation of the deadly weapons like Atom Bombs and Hydrogen Bombs threaten the very existence of

mankind on the face of this earth. In the modern age of hatred, conflict, violence and totalitarian war we have surely lost the peace of mind enjoyed by our forefathers. We have changed nationalism to internationalism and are inspired by the ideals of universal brotherhood and the realization of One World. Our womanhood has, of course, attained much progress and freedom and is enjoying equal opportunities with men in modern times. Even the idea of such an equal treatment was strongly resisted in the times of our forefathers. Thus although we have lost much in the spiritual and mental side, it may be said in general that we are better than our forefathers.

(418 words)

2. "Those who admire modern civilization usually identify it with the steam engine and the electric telegraph—"
 Write an essay, giving your views on the salient features of modern civilization. (WBCS '56)
 Or, The contribution of Science to culture. (IAS '67)

We live in an age of science. So, modern civilization, as it is generally understood, is the product of scientific advancement. The nature and extent of a country's civilization is now judged by the progress it has attained in the sphere of science. Epoch-making inventions have opened up infinite possibilities and men had started looking forward to a utopia. The amenities of life have already increased a thousandfold and achievements undreamt of before, have been incentive to ceaseless striving for more and mightier achievements.

Steam engine and telegraph are the two outstanding inventions of science, which, above anything else, have contributed in a very large measure to the growth and development of modern civilization. Limits of time and space have been brought substantially under human control, facilitating increasingly wider contact between man and man. Steam engine and electric telegraph are therefore considered as the two outstanding features of modern civilization.

The present age of science is essentially the age of machine. Mechanization has reduced manual labour and has led to considerable saving of time and energy. In the sphere of

industry more and more machines are being brought to use. Industries are developing by leaps and bounds and are adding from day to day to the amenities of life. The old ways of life are giving place to new and the old order of things are being held in disdain. Lure of modernism is drawing more and more people to the towns and cities. Urbanization and industrialization have thus become the most striking traits of the age.

Modern civilization is democratic in conception. The proletariat is steadily shedding its age-old inanity and is refusing to blindly submit to the domination of the capitalists. This has brought about a new outlook on life along with new complexities and conflicts. Continuous struggle between capital and labour is the product of our democratic civilization.

Growth of feminism in society demanding equality of status between man and woman, tends to shake the social systems to their foundation. This, and a growing spirit of nationalism, often aggressive, are among the remarkable features of our age.

It is generally assumed that human civilization is steadily advancing from age to age and in this age of science it has attained a stage of progress hitherto deemed improbable. But doubts are already being expressed as to whether humanity is moving onward or backward. Science has conferred on us many amenities of life. Modern means of communication have brought us closer to all the peoples of the world, facilitating development of trade and commerce and interchange of ideas necessary for mutual understanding. Mechanization of industries has reduced manual labour and has brought about speedier and much more increased output of the necessities of life. Science has also succeeded in a large measure in harnessing the tremendous forces latent in Nature to put them to our use.

But, inspite of all these, can it be said that modern civilization is an unmixed blessing? We have lost the peace and contentment which our forbears enjoyed. Life has become infinitely more complex. Class hatred, sectarian differences, parochial feeling, ideological conflict and international jealousy are rampant all the world over. Notwithstanding increased

trade and commerce and scientific ways of production of goods.. we find unemployment and starvation everywhere. The benefits of science seem to be far outweighed by its potentialities for evil. The present age is commonly described as the 'atomic age'. Atomic energy bids fair to revolutionize our ways of living and outlook on life. But while ushering in a new era of human civilization, atomic science is threatening humanity with extinction. Invention of terrible nuclear weapons by the scientists of the two big power-blocs, may at any moment bring about our total annihilation.

Modern civilization is essentially materialistic. It has failed therefore to satisfy the spiritual cravings of man and to contribute to his moral uplift. The most crying need of the world to-day is a spirit of fellowship among nations which may bring into use all wisdom and intellect for common good and employment of science for the benefit of humanity and not for its destruction.

(685 words)

8. "Art should never be didactic" and "It should never be anything else"—Discuss these views and show which of these is acceptable to you. (WBCS '56)

"Art" is a very flexible term which covers a wide sphere of human thought and action. Art has been interpreted in many ways by many people and even now a clear and definite conception of art is more or less clouded by conflicting views and theories. Art is as old as civilization itself, perhaps older. We have striking evidences of attempts of pre-historic men at drawing or carving pictures of natural objects, specially of animals they used to chase and kill for food. These are just reproductions not altogether without touches of fineness born of innate aesthetic sense.

With the advancement of civilization the artistic sense of man has found expression in a wide variety of ways. The deep passion of the human soul, stirred and stimulated by the everwidening experiences of life, has manifested itself primarily in music, painting and poetry. These have had a chastening influence on the human mind, steadying and sustaining it in the multiplying conflicts and complexities. The joy which a

work of art affords, the soothing effect it exerts on the care-worn heart of man and its universality which serves as a unifying bond, are perhaps the greatest blessings which art confers on humanity.

Regarding the genesis and mission of art, views are sharply divided. There are some who look upon art as product of genius which consists in taking infinite pains. Strenuous effort with a definite aim in view is in this sense the source of art. There are many, however, who hold the view that a work of art, is a creation and not a manufacture, being a spontaneous expression of the sense of joy and beauty that lies deep in the human soul. It is joy and profound awe and wonder inspired by things of beauty made by God and man, that have welled out in the form of artistic creations from the inmost depths of the human soul.

There are two different ways of approach to art. One is to judge it by the end it has in view and the other is to find out what it seeks to express and how it is expressed, without taking into account the results that may or may not ensue. Those who believe in the former approach are content with the aesthetic experience it involves and the sense of joy and wonder it produces. But there are others who seek to find out in a work of art the apparent end the artist has in view and the nature of effect it is likely to produce on the mind. To them a work of art is to be judged by its utility and by the influence it exerts for good or for evil.

'Art for Art's sake' is a much discussed dictum. No clear definition of the phrase has yet emerged from the enormous volume of controversy that has gathered around it. The exponents of this dictum seem to think, like Oscar Wilde, that 'the only beautiful things are the things that do not concern us', or, as Keats says in other words, 'Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty !' They appear to hold that art has no philosophical, intellectual or moral background and has no relation to environments.

There are people who do not subscribe to these views. They believe, perhaps rightly, that art is not merely a spontaneous expression of the artist's emotions ; it is a product of various forces—social, intellectual and moral. The artist's imagination

is, no doubt, an important factor, but it has to be borne in mind that a man's individuality is influenced and shaped by his environment and an innate consciousness of moral and material values. A work of art may thus be looked upon as a product of the artist's social, moral and intellectual being.

The place of morality in art has been the subject of much controversy. Art is not essentially didactic, the primary function of an artist is not to teach. But an artist is an unconscious teacher in the sense that by stimulating our sense of beauty, joy and wonder it makes us better and nobler. So as Goethe says, a great work of art does not teach us, but changes us. (698 words)

4. **"Only a leisured class can afford to devote itself to art and learning ; therefore a classless society will necessarily be the enemy of both"—Discuss this statement and give your own conclusion.**

(WBCS' 57)

Society normally denotes a body of civilized persons bound together by community of interests, political, religious, cultural and racial. Since the individual is the unit of society and each individual differs from another, society naturally resolves itself into ranks or classes. Classless society may therefore sound as a misnomer. Present-day socialism which is fast spreading with the spread of democracy all over the civilized world, aims at abolition of classes based on exploitation of labour by capital. Most of the advanced democracies of the world are now socialistic in character. But human nature being what it is, the much discussed classless society still remains more or less a Utopian conception.

Progress of democracy and socialistic ideas may go a great way to levelling the society by changing the outlook of the individuals constituting it. Abolition of private property and equal distribution of wealth are likely to minimize the rigidity of classes, but some sort of exclusiveness and isolation is bound to persist in society according to different leanings and avocations. It is, therefore, needless to apprehend that the modern trend towards levelling of classes will prove detrimental to art

and learning. Like the conflicts of interests between the haves and the havenots, there may not be any conflict between the intelligentsia and the unlettered masses.

It is, besides, a doubtful assumption that leisure is essential for cultivation of art and learning and that they cannot flourish unless there is a leisured class in society. A certain amount of aloofness is of course necessary for mental concentration in the pursuit of art and learning, in a world of thought and fancy, of stress and strife. Leisure is not cessation, but respite from work, which rejuvenates the fagged mind to enable it to recreate imaginations and experiences. By leisured class we are not to understand the class of the idle rich who can afford to do without work, for people of this class have rarely been found inclined to intellectual pursuits and contributions to the realm of art and letters from them have been negligible. Art is expression and interpretation of life in the light of an ideal and learning is most profound when life is the educator.

Even if the socialists' dream of classless society ever materializes, it will not mean death of art and learning, for they are not the monopoly of the so-called leisured class, nor are they primarily dependent on leisure. In one respect, however, art and learning may suffer for lack of patronage, if the leisured class is liquidated, as it is being done in India. The socialistic pattern of society, as envisaged by the Indian Republic, naturally implies levelling of classes, although it is not very clear what the real objective is. But with the abolition of feudalism, gone is the generous patronage which art and letters used to receive from princes and potentates. It is, however, a very happy augury that the State is being gradually awoken to the reality of the situation.

Man is by nature fond of grouping. It is, therefore, often seen that petty bourgeois classes grow out of the proletariat. So, even in a classless society we shall always have that distinct section which we call the intelligentsia, in which genius will find time to blossom and talent will create congenial environment for itself in the midst of handicaps that may seem to surround it.

(563 words)

**5. Should literature and the arts be patronised
by the State ? (WBCS '68, IAS '73)**

From the very dawn of civilization literature and arts have flourished under the patronage of some people. In the earliest days a minstrel's living depended entirely upon his power to please his chief. Though artists and poets have their own inspiration to fall back upon, without the patronage of some men of consequence they could have hardly carried on with their avocations.

In the past the feudal lords or big landlords often took keen interest in arts and literature and encouraged a number of artists and poets to do their work on liberal grants of money or land. With the disappearance of feudalism and landed aristocracy artists and men of letters have been exposed to the fierce struggle for existence. Since literature and fine arts do not have the usual utilitarian value, artists have very little capital to trade in their wares. Hence, in the struggle for survival they are either using up their talents for commercial transactions or are getting lost and extinct.

It cannot be denied that the patronage of a few individuals also led to some sort of idolatry in art and literature. It also produced some sort of made-to-order works of art, often circumscribing the interests of the patron. Nevertheless the patrons of art and literature helped even the great artists to survive and gave them the necessary protection against poverty and vulgarization of art.

In the present set-up of society, literature and arts have a fair chance to survive as essential ingredients of democracy. From the ivory tower of imagination they can now climb down to the harsh and grating reality. Yet the artist must have his sense of security and freedom without which no good creations are possible. Hence, in a Welfare State artists and men of letters must be patronized by the State so that they can devote themselves to their works of art without ever being overshadowed by the personal favour of some individuals or political parties. In Socialist States artists and writers are very much controlled by the dictates of the Government which patronize

them. But this control over the men of letters and artists often prevents them from exercising their creative faculty freely. Boris Pasternak, the author of *Dr. Zhivago* had to smuggle out his creation for publication abroad which later earned him the laurel of the Nobel Prize for Literature. The Government can, however, prove to be a good patron of art and letters in any country without being a keeper of conscience.

It is surely far better to equalize opportunities in social life so that every man may be able to realize his full potentialities and work to develop his personality in the field of arts and letters. The really talented persons get the State patronizing to go further in their own line.

In our country the Sangeet Natak Academy and the Lalit Kala Academy are no doubt playing a significant role, patronizing art and letters, without being dictator in these fields. Honest encouragement given to artists and writers can often bring substantial returns for the country in forms of truth and beauty. Hence, the State can very well assume this responsibility. (523 words)

6. Does the artist have a moral obligation to society ? (WBCS '69, '73)

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a school of artists arose who advocated the theory of Art for Art's sake. Thus Baudelaire declared, "Poetry has no end beyond itself. If a poet has followed a moral end, he has diminished his poetic force." During the Victorian Age Swinburne strongly advocated the freedom of art. He said, "No work of art has any worth or life in it that is not done on the absolute terms of art and the worth of a poem has properly nothing to do with its moral meaning or design." In England Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde were the most enthusiastic leaders of the Art for Art's sake movement.

We cannot readily accept the views of Baudelaire, Swinburne, Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde that art is for its own sake and has no relation with morality. The artist cannot keep himself aloof from human society. He has to live with people who have respect for moral values of life. In order

to make his appeal to society he must keep his art on a level which may not be shocking to decent people. While gratifying his aesthetic sense, he has to keep in view the moral values of life. Indeed, art cannot be divorced from morality. It cannot stand in complete isolation from the moral values of society.

A work of art is reduced to a low position as soon as sin and immorality creep into it. Works which deal with offensive subjects and simply gratify some sensual feelings can never be ranked in the circle of great art. That is why 'Rape of Lucrece', 'Beggar's Opera', 'Nana,' and 'Mysteries of the Court of London' could not enter into the temple of art. Even Walter Pater realized this basic fact about true art. He admitted that 'great art is only possible when there is a hidden eminence or nobility in the subject'.

The purely aesthetic view of art has never found support with great poets and artists. The ancient Greek writers believed in the moralistic view of art. Plato, Aeschylus, Euripedes, Aristophanes and Aristotle emphasised the moral value of art. The great Russian novelist Tolstoy held the view that art was important but it should be valued in terms of other things. Among the English writers Milton, Johnson, Wordsworth, Shelley, Ruskin and Arnold vigorously advocated the moralistic view of art. In the present century Shaw emphatically declared, "For the sake of art I would not take the trouble of writing a single line."

Morals in a civilized society are part and parcel of healthy living and art whose objective is to entertain people has to keep before it the motto of the well-being of people. Indeed works of art have to conform to the general principle of good or bad in order to be useful or entertaining. Of course, what applies to life in society does not uniformly apply to life on the canvas. Since imagination has a significant role to play in any work of art, the artist can surely take some liberties with the commonplace rules of conduct, and he has some licence for his idealizations. But so long art works within the limits of social responsibility and provides a source of refined pleasure it is worthy of emulation, but as soon as artists use that vital

media to incite some unhealthy ideas or passions in men, art degenerates into immoral activity.

The function of the moralist is to exhort, and that of the artist is to exhibit. But every artist becomes a moralist when he seeks to express life in its continuous striving for a richer fulfilment. The artist has evidently a moral obligation to society. (614 words)

7. "Objective knowledge provides with powerful instruments for the achievement of certain ends, but the ultimate goal itself and the longing to reach it must come from another source (Einstein)." Do you agree? Give your opinions in the form of an essay.

(WBCS '58)

Or, Objective Knowledge and Subjective Knowledge

Man's First Disobedience has been the object of opprobrium of poets and theologians from age to age. But the colossal fact remains that the bite at the forbidden fruit which constituted the Original Sin, has made God's good world what it is to-day. "Know thyself" urge the Upanishads. The curiosity to know oneself as well as things around him, has transformed man from a submissive automaton to god's noblest creation striving incessantly to justify himself as His own image.

Thus knowledge has given incentive to action by inspiring more and more curiosity to know the unknown. This is the very bed-rock of what we call civilization, education or culture. Knowledge is sometimes confused with learning, but it must be remembered that knowledge does not depend solely on learning imparted through books and equipments in schools and colleges. There are numerous instances of great savants and saints in our country who have been absolutely unlettered. Knowledge can therefore be intuitive, born of introspection and contemplation. Such knowledge we may call subjective knowledge, since it is a spontaneous outcome of mental processes.

Objective knowledge, on the other hand, has certain definite objects in view and is acquired through careful observation

of men and things and the diverse phenomena of Nature. In this sense scientific knowledge is primarily objective, as it generalizes the results of observation and experience by means of rigid experiments in order to achieve some definite ends.

This naturally brings us to the distinction and relation between philosophy and science. Philosophy, as it is generally understood, is an all-embracing study of man and Nature in relation to the fountain-head of all creation. Science is essentially objective, since it concerns itself with different phenomena of Nature to probe into the mysteries in them, which often baffle our understanding. The efforts are directed towards the appearances of things, that is, their external manifestations. The scope of science is thus limited to perception by means of the senses. But its fundamental basis is mental culture or subjective study of man and Nature in relation to that "Divine Event to which the whole creation moves." Every science proceeds with certain assumptions born of experience and observation. We call them theories or hypotheses which spring from contemplation of life as a whole and not merely of its different aspects. Ideas form the basis of investigation into the mysteries of Nature. Thus "the longing to reach the goal of science", as Einstein has so aptly said, "must come from another source", that is from subjective knowledge born of contemplation and meditation.

The scientist's job in his laboratory is not just a mechanical affair. Concepts and theories are systematised and adapted to particular ways of investigation with a view to attaining precise results. Absolute exactitude is his aim in the particular sphere of his activity, but in achieving this he has to interpret his findings in the light of the assumptions he has started with. Thus the truths arrived at by the sciences are tested by *a priori* knowledge of mind and matter,

The sciences have revolutionized life. Their potentialities are incalculable, either for good or for evil. The incentive for scientific discoveries comes from the ageless longing of man to know the unknown. The objectivity towards which science is constantly tending must be modified by a subjective view of things, since all intellectual activity is inspired by the faculties

of the mind, not always associated with objective learning. "Knowledge is power" is a trite saying. It has shaped the destiny of man by unravelling the truths that lie hidden in external appearances and by breaking down impediments to self-realisation and self-development. Scientific or objective knowledge, as Einstein has said, "provides with powerful instruments for the achievement of certain ends", but the incentive is invariably obtained from the profound realisation that "true human perfection is a harmonious perfection developing all sides of our humanity." (646 words)

8. "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind"—Discuss this statement.

(WBCS '57)

The conflict between science and religion is as old as the hills. It is a commonly accepted belief that iconoclastic science strikes at the very root of unquestioning faith which is the basis of religion. The inherent conservatism of religion has never taken kindly to rationalism of science, although their approach is fundamentally the same. Both seek truth, one through "faith and faith alone", and the other through observation and reasoning.

Science aims at proving things, while religion rests on "believing where we cannot prove". Theological conceptions have thus been at variance with scientific deductions in many respects. Distrust of science led to crystallization of traditions into fanatical beliefs and a superiority complex brought about isolation of religion from the realities of life.

But the conflict between science and religion is at best superficial. One is the complement to the other and a compromise between the two is essential for both. Objectivity of science has to be weighed by subjectivity of religion, so that religion may guide science in proper utilization of the enormous knowledge and tremendous powers it has wrested and is wresting from Nature. Good of humanity depends on rationalization of religion and, if one might say so, spiritualization of science.

Persecution of science by religion has persisted from the earliest times. Theological doctrines based on age-old traditions received jolt after jolt from new scientific theories evolved from age to age. The scriptures were deemed infallible and any assertion that sought to disprove the veracity of theological concepts would be condemned as heresy. The Church had the backing of the State in ruthless suppression of those indefatigable seekers after truth, who had the temerity to promulgate theories contradictory to age-old scriptural beliefs.

Happy, religion in its orthodox sense is gradually shaking off the trammels of convention and dogma and is being steadily rationalized in the light of new scientific discoveries. This much-needed broadening of outlook of religion has been primarily brought about by development of comparative religion. Unreasoned fanaticism born of blind adherence to convention and dogma is gradually being tempered with tolerance and understanding fostered by the democratic spirit spreading all the world over. The role of science in this direction has been of inestimable benefit to humanity.

Religious intolerance, parochial tendencies and narrow nationalism are responsible for mutual hatred, lurking suspicion and consequent race for armament which are now threatening and vitiating international relations. Science has forged frightful instruments of destruction which power-mad nations are brandishing against each other. Unless religion guides and restrains science and turns its discoveries from evil into good, both religion and science are doomed.

This is why a great theologian has said that "a religion which does not touch science and a science which does not touch religion are mutilated and barren." Religion in its higher and wider connotation springs from the conception of a Supreme Being who controls and guides the order of things. All scientific investigations are likewise based on the fundamental presumption that there is an order of things in Nature. They are, therefore, not hostile to each other, but are essentially the same in their source and objective. One is incomplete without the other, though their spheres are different. Science is concerned with

intellectual perception, while religion aims at spiritual perception of the fundamentals of life.

Nothing is more needed in the present-day world than harmony between religion and science. Science works to reveal the laws that guide and regulate Nature, while religion concerns itself with the Maker of all laws. (584 words)

9. **"We need more of philosophy and less of science in the modern world."** (WBCS '65)

The observations within quotation must have been induced by the reckless and uncontrolled advance of science in the modern world. The fact cannot be disputed that there has been phenomenal progress of science in recent years. To-day we are thinking in terms of conquering space and journeying not only to the moon but to other planets of the sun. The splitting of atom has opened up unreamed vistas before the human race. But it has brought the world to the verge of total annihilation. The time has perhaps come to pause in the race for perfection of science and turn our thoughts a little to what it all means. The utility of science lies in bringing material comforts within the reach of man so that his life may become easier and therefore happier. If instead of achieving this end, science threatens human race with total extinction, it does not certainly fulfil the purpose for which it was brought into existence. Even apart from this fear of extinction from atomic warfare that hangs over our race like sword of Damocles, can we claim that the progress of science over all these years has been able to make the earth a better place than what it was before? If we could give an affirmative answer to the question, then surely science's claim of superiority to philosophy could not be disputed by any sensible man. But as we look around we have to confess that the earth is far from the ideal place that science was expected to render it. There are a few countries, it is true, which are enormously rich and where starvation is unknown. But, by and large, the major portion of the earth's surface continues to be ravaged by hunger and nakedness and the picture is not rosier than what it used to be before the coming of science. As for the relation between man and man, it continues to be bedevilled by jealousy

and hatred and one looks in vain for the love and understanding that should exist among men. Nations glare at each other across the frontiers as they used to do before the days of science and the only change is that they have been supplied with enormously mightier weapons of mass destruction. The benefits of science are enjoyed only by a handful of people and a few favoured nations but they are unavailable to the majority of men who wallow in filth and darkness, the same as before. The time, therefore, has surely come to seriously ponder whether man should continue in the course he has followed so far and allow science to make further conquest over Nature or he should turn away and develop the philosophical doctrines that promise peace and a brighter future for human race.

(463 words)

10. Do you think the worship of Science will destroy all the traditional values in India ?

(WBCS '66, IAS '63)

Ever since the dawn of civilization down to the present era science has been the most powerful agent in bringing about remarkable changes over the world. But there is an obvious distinction between ancient science and the science which dominates us to-day. The study of science made in the last few centuries or more particularly in the present century has quite surpassed the material development known to mankind at an earlier stage of its recorded progress. We cannot, however, afford to forget that man on earth had science enough in the distant past to enable him to live in comforts which we of this age might envy. But what distinguishes the modern science from the ancient is that while the civilizations which gave men those comforts have perished with the passage of time, man, now at the climax of materialistic progress, finds himself almost on the verge of total doom and gropes for a moral uplift. It would thus be appropriate to visualize modern science as deterrent to the traditional values by which we in this country could serve to promote the fulfilment of a distinctive vision.

Science embraces all the fields of knowledge, particularly

physical, biological and social. Science has thus enabled us to know all the hidden truths of this universe. But the more we have learnt of the outer nature, the less inquisitive have we been of the inner-self. We in India have always shown an unshakable faith in the conquest of inner-self as a means of attaining oneness with godhead. The pursuit of the inner-self is found to endow the individual with mastery of the outer nature as an incidental consequence. Great powers can be achieved through material means. It can likewise be gained through spiritual means. In a conflict between the two, the latter always prevails. This is a truth of which our ancestors were fully convinced. The defeat of King Viswamitra with all his materialistic strength at the spiritually elevated hands of Vasistha is well illustrative of the above truth.

But very unfortunately the tendency of modern science seems to be wholly discouraging to the spirit of self-restraint and spiritual uplift. The abundant luxuries produced by modern science panders only to the sensuality of man. The idea of contraceptives, hailed as a blessing of science, is wholly contrary to our traditional ideal of self-restraint. There is thus no running away from the fact that modern science is largely instrumental in destroying great traditional values in India. Despite the continuing threat of aggression from China which has developed nuclear weapons very recently, India adheres to the decision not to go in for nuclear weapons as that is deterrent to the Indian tradition of peaceful co-existence and her ideology of nuclear disarmament.

The significant circumstances about the evolution of man is that in addition to the organic there is the spiritual aspect to this evolution. The real advancement of Indian culture is possible only through a healthy co-operation between science and traditional values.

(500 words)

- 11. If the National Library were on fire and only six books could be saved from it, which six should be chosen and why ?** (WBCS '65)

It is not easy to choose only six books for preservation out of the world's classics that must adorn the shelves of the E. E. & C.—2

National Library. But if the painful task must be attempted my first choice would be a collection of the *Vedas and Upanishads*. They are without doubt the earliest literature extant today in which the hopes, prayer and aspirations of men at a very early stage of this earth lie enshrined. These slokas give us wonderful glimpses of life in the early days of this ancient land and they will be for ever lost to us if we allow the Vedas and Upanishads to be burnt down. My next choice would be a collection of the *works of Kalidasa*. The reason is obvious, Kalidasa represents the highest glory of Sanskrit dramatic literature. If we allow him to be forgotten our link with the golden days of Sanskrit drama will be snapped for ever. My next choice would be the *Bhagavat Gita*. The Gita is not only a sacred book to the Hindus, it is a never-failing source of inspiration to countless people on this earth, who derive solace and comfort from this book in their days of trouble. Men turn to this Book of Books in their days of gloom and depression. The inspiring message of Krishna to Arjuna when the latter was assailed by doubts and scruples on the eve of fateful battle has instilled courage into many a despairing heart and brought hope into households overshadowed by sudden calamity. If we lose this book, the loss will be too heavy for the world to bear. *Rabindranath's Book of Poems* will be my next choice. He is not only a poet and a singer who has given voice to our unuttered dreams, but he is also an age all by himself. The Renaissance in modern Bengal and in the whole of India to-day will remain largely unexplained if we have no access to the richly varied music from Rabindranath's lyre. Next to Rabindranath stands *Saratchandra* who was the first to introduce a note of realism into the highly romantic character of Bengali literature in his day. Both in his treatment of subject as also in the language that was chosen for the treatment there was something novel and unprecedented. The future generations who will desire to understand the growth of Bengali literature can ill afford to lose the works of Saratchandra. My last choice would be the *works of Shakespeare*. And this not only for the intrinsic merit of Shakespeare's plays but also for the great influence they have exerted on the growth and development of Bengali literature

as it is to-day. It is also representative of the English literature. To think that the plays of Shakespeare are burnt to ashes is to sound the depths of despair to the future generations.

(475 words)

12. Which character in history or fiction would you like to meet and why ?

Or, Which character in English or Bengali fiction would you like to meet and why ? (WBCS '64, '66)

(1) Character in English fiction

Sir Isaac Newton was a great scientist and very much confident about the depth of his knowledge. He could, therefore, say that he was almost a child playing before the sea of knowledge. But we the ordinary people can hardly dare say this, lest people do actually believe it. So I frankly confess that I have read a lot of books and while reading them I have been impressed by a number of characters. I have often loved them, thought about them and what is more, talked to them in dream. But to single out a particular character, whom I would like to meet from that galaxy of characters, puts me to great difficulty. Had it been from dramatic works I would have felt no hesitancy in picking up the immortal Falstaff from Shakespeare's historical plays. For, the freshness of his character has often driven me to think of talking to him. But surprisingly enough, I cannot choose his counterpart in any English novel. Here my natural and spontaneous inclination is for *Heathcliff* in Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*. Mr. Heathcliff, the landlord of the Thrushcross Grange and of the farm-house Wuthering Heights, looked like a dark-skinned gypsy with his dress and manners like a country squire. Originally he was brought to Wuthering Heights by old Mr. Earnshaw as a dirty, ragged, black-haired boy. Later he managed to destroy the Earnshaw family and own the Heights and Grange estates and keep the heir of that family as his dependant.

One may be taken aback by my choice inasmuch as the novel is one of nineteenth century and the character is an extremely roguish one. But he inspires my imagination most. When

I read the novel for the first time I was struck with wonder and admiration for this character. At that time Heathcliff was a passion with me. I used to observe people and try to find him in any one of them. But none of them seemed to me to be his like. Indeed the tremendous vitality of his character inspires me to meet him in a lonely evening in the solitary stretch of Wuthering Heights. I have some questions to ask him even though to-day I cannot exactly remember the details of the novel. I have often thought if I could penetrate into the deep of his mysterious heart; if I could know what exactly made him so cruel in one hand and so pure a lover on the other hand; if I could know what was the true cause behind his vengeance against the Earnshaws. These make his character extremely complex to the critics. But to me he does not appear to be complex. He is only infinitely varied. Finally I would like to meet and talk to him; only because he is an extraordinary character and does not lose himself in the crowd. (475 words)

(II) Character in Bengali fiction

During this period of my life I have read many books of fiction. I started the habit in my school days and continues even now. Many characters both of history and fiction have left indelible marks on the mind. I would like to recall many of them to my mind but I would like to meet face to face with only one character, namely that of *Indranath*, the unforgettable friend of Sreekanta's boyhood. The story says that Indra disappeared completely from Sreekanta's horizon one day and they never met again. When I read the story for the first time I was only a school boy. I then used to wonder if I would ever have the good fortune to meet the truant boy. I remember how eagerly I scanned the features of Fakirs and Sannyasis to detect even a faint resemblance to the fancied character-sketch of Indranath drawn in my boyish mind. Not content with observing them from the outside I made friends with them and plied them with questions about their early life which were obviously irritating to many of them. But I could not help putting them questions for my boyish soul was eager for communion with

that elusive child of the novelist's fancy. Indra was a perfect embodiment of the heroic ideal in my child mind. As a boy I was fond of sports and adventures and did not like boys who spent all their times over books. Often I was reproved by my elders for my boyish pranks. Small wonder that I would be deeply attracted to the personality of Indra. His success at school was nothing to speak of and some of his habits were such as would be roundly denounced by teachers of ethics. But there were nothing to my boyish mind beside the virtues he possessed—his courage that defied all terrors, his sympathy for persons in distress and his readiness to take all the consequences of his action on his broad shoulders. My heart ached for this boy who was almost an outcast from his own family, for whom very few cared but who had so many cares in his tiny heart. He was absolutely fearless and self-less. The dread of being stung by reptiles did not stop him from alighting from the boat in the creek and tow it towards the open river. Added to this was his childlike faith in God. His curiosity to learn the secrets of the snake-charmer's art first brought him into contact with Annada Didi. Once he called her Didi, his own elder sister, he lavished all the wealth of his loving heart upon her and did not hesitate even to risk his life for her sake. Indra was the hero of my early years as he has been the hero of many others. Later I realised that Indra's character was the offshoot of a romantic imagination not to be found in real life. Even so, I cannot help wishing to meet him face to face and talk to him if in some inscrutable way he can be brought back to life. (518 words)

**13. What writer now dead would you like to see
alive today and why ? (WBCS '67)**

The world today is indeed in need of an idealist like Mathew Arnold who would try to set the mad world aright and bring "calm of mind, all passion spent". The world today is in a state of flux. It knows no stability. The domestic-delicacy of our society has been upset by the two global wars. The higher values of life have ceased to mean anything to a disillusioned generation. We live in a world where there is no faith, where

there is no love, where there is no fellow-feeling even. It is a selfish world where everyone lives for himself. The world today is Eliot's Waste Land and we are all grunting and sweating under a weary life. The only man who could bring back hope and happiness, who could take us out of the rut we have fallen into is Arnold. I wish Arnold walked the world once more because he alone could set it right.

We have been led astray and the word "culture" has either ceased to mean anything to us, or it has started meaning the wrong things. Possibly today culture means being defiant of conventional values. Arnold could have once again made us realize what is true culture, could have given us his message of "sweetness and light".

Mathew Arnold (1822-88) was famous as an educationist, a poet and a critic. He ranks as one of the great English literary critics. Arnold was a prominent figure in that great galaxy of Victorian poets who were working simultaneously, viz. Tennyson, Browning, Rossetti, William Morris and Swinburne. His immediate predecessors were Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley and Byron. Beauty was the quest of all of them and in that sense they were all akin, but in the matter of theological learning, spirituality of outlook and ethical purpose he held an esteemed position.

An encounter with Arnold might help us to solve many contemporary problems. He would have certainly given us some concrete suggestions about how to solve our educational problems. The chief reason for our disillusionment and loss of faith in the higher values of life is to be found in our neglect of the classics. Among the educationists today a like of Arnold is seldom to be found. Education has been dragged down to the mart of economic strife and gain. It is no longer relentless pursuit of knowledge beyond the utmost bound of human thought; we do not any more care for intellectual integrity. Arnold could have pointed out in no uncertain terms that the only way to banish vulgarity, hideousness, ignorance and violence is to be aware of the "essential character of human perfection" through a close study of the classics.

If once more Arnold came alive he would have felt the need.

for order in a disintegrating society ; he would have dwelt on the relation of the individual to the State ; and he could have defined the place in our civilization of science, industry and religion. These are precisely the problems that occupy the minds of thinkers today and if Arnold were still alive no one would speak as he would do on them. (520 words)

- 14. If you were made Prime Minister of India, what would be the first reform you would introduce and why ?** (WBCS '65)

If I were the Prime Minister of India, the first reform I would like to introduce would be in the price structure. Prices of things in this country at the present moment are going up like anything and almost every trouble that the country has to face may be traced to this source. If I were the Prime Minister I would attempt with all the authority I could command to hold the price line. Prices have gone up to such an extent that not to speak of the poor, even the middle-class house-holders have been hard put to it to make the two ends meet. For them also it has become increasingly harder to find food and clothing in adequate quantity for their dependants leaving aside the question of luxuries. Discontent resulting from ever-increasing prices, which seem to defy all Government efforts to stop them, has spread over all classes and sapped the energy and vitality of the people. In such conditions it is idle to expect that they will give their whole-hearted co-operation to the Five-Year Plans which are intended to shape the future of the country. When the present is so dismal and bleak, it is useless to ask them to think of the future. As a direct result of the spiralling of prices there is demand from all classes of people, whether employed by the Government or outside agencies, for a rise in their wages and emoluments. Even teachers who are known to be very patient and unassuming, have raised their voices for a revision of their wage scales. When the demand of all these people is conceded it will lead to further inflation and a fresh spurt in the spiralling of prices so that whatever improvements are effected in the wage structure will all be neutralised by further rise in prices. Popular discontent can be allayed only by a

judicious policy of holding the price line. For this the nation's efforts should be directed to greater production for if the output does not keep pace with the increasing demand, there is bound to be increase^d in the prices of things. There is a widespread suspicion in the country to-day that the present upward trend in prices is due not so much to a backlog in production as to hoarding of articles in popular demand for personal gain. Hoarders and profiteers are the real culprits. If I were the Prime Minister I would take the most stringent steps to see that these hoarders and profiteers are suitably punished and the articles hoarded are brought into the market for immediate sale to the public at a reasonable price. (441 words)

15. If I were the Dictator of India..... (WBCS '74)

I am an ardent admirer of democracy. My mind is fundamentally anti-dictatorial; it is full of democratic sentiments. But I wish to be the dictator of India for a limited period of time to make the foundations of democracy stronger here.

Democracy has been functioning in India since 1947; but there has been no appreciable improvement of the lot of common man in course of the last thirty years. It is no exaggeration to say that democracy has failed miserably in our country. If I become the dictator of India, I shall try my best to remove the drawbacks of our democracy within a year.

Democracy is government of the people, for the people, by the people. So a democracy can function only when the people are enlightend. After thirty years of Independence most of the pople of our country lie in darkness of ignorance. Our illiterate voters are exploited by clever politicians during elections. Thus democracy has been reduced to a farce in India. As soon as I become the dictator of India I propose to introduce free compulsory education for all upto the age of fifteen. During my regime the State would bear the entire cost of the education and upbringing of all citizens. I would ensure equal educational opportunities for all. I would enforce strict discipline in schools and colleges. Our young men and women would receive physical training and spiritual lessons

from properly qualified teachers. Educational institutions would become centres for intellectual, physical and moral development of citizens.

When I become the dictator of India, I would launch a severe attack on poverty and would take all measures to hold the price line so as to keep it within the reach of the common people. Eradication of poverty would be an important programme of my government. There would be fair distribution of national wealth in my country. However, I would not allow my countrymen to live in luxury. Production of luxury goods would be drastically reduced for home consumption. Wine shops and five-star hotels would be closed down. There would be neither beggars nor millionaires in our country during my regime.

At present corruption is rampant in all spheres of public life in India. There has been an erosion of our age-old moral values in the post-Independence period. Most of the political parties are morally bankrupt; and our politicians are primarily guided by enlightened self-interest. All the political parties receive donations from business men. So the members of the business community go on making undue profits without any fear of the government. Common people cannot purchase even the essential commodities whose prices are increasing day by day. Rice, wheat, sugar, kerosine and coal have become rare commodities. Sufferings of my countrymen will go on increasing if the present government remains in office for a long time as they miserably failed to show any radical change in their system of administration. I aspire to become the dictator of my country because I am convinced that dictatorial measures are necessary to eradicate corruption. When I become the dictator of the country, I would ban all the political parties and give capital punishment to all the hoarders, adulterers and black-marketers but there should be no excess or abuse of power.

As soon as my mission is fulfilled, I shall resign my post because I do not want to become a Hitler or an Ayub. Let me hope that God would choose me as His agent to bring about a moral regeneration in India and make me the architect of the destinies of her teeming millions.

(600 words)

16. In what circumstances can civil liberties be justifiably suppressed by the State ? (WBCS '69)

The view that liberty of all forms is absolute and the law which represents the expression of sovereignty as inimical to liberty, is based on a misconception of the nature of liberty and of the relation of the individual to society. It is now believed that individual can enjoy civil liberty only to that extent to which it is good to him and to the rest of the community. Liberty is not unbridled licence to do anything which is dictated by a man's passions.

The truth that everyman ought to be free has for its other side the complementary and consequential truth that no man can be absolutely free. Thus liberty under all circumstances, must have limitations and control.

Liberty cannot exist unless it is regulated by the State. The State should create the necessary conditions. The State has an important and vital role to play by upholding the rights of the individuals which give liberty. Since liberty could be ensured and controlled by State law, it is said that law is the condition of liberty and liberty is the end of law.

Although the State has an important role to play, it is not free from limitations. Individuals are allowed to enjoy rights, but these are to be limited by the State action. But the State in its turn cannot act as a dictator. A norm is to be fixed upon which the State should function; every citizen should have the right to personal freedom; the State cannot limit these rights unless it is demanded by the general good of society. The right to property is no doubt duly protected by the State. In all democratic States individual is guaranteed the right to freedom of thought and expression, but even this right is not unlimited. If the safety of the State be threatened, the government can encroach upon this right. In times of emergency caused by war, aggression or internal disturbances or emergency caused by the failure of the constitutional machinery or by financial instability, the President or the Head of the State can suspend all the fundamental rights of the people and no remedy will be available in any Court of Law against legislative and executive actions of the State. On such occasions it is a

necessity to curb the civil liberties to some extent so that the anti-social elements or those performing subversive or anti-national activities can be rounded up and detained with or without trial till the emergency is lifted. The hoarders and adulterers, who can escape the normal law of the country, can also be brought to book and severely punished or detained under emergency provisions of law which restrict the application of fundamental rights for the time being. Since there is every chance of misuse of such unrestricted power under the garb of emergency in the hands of authorities, this state of emergency should not continue a day more than it is really necessary for the welfare and security of the country. Continuance of the emergency condition for an indefinite period may tempt the authorities to weed out the undesirable parties or oppositionists and thereby pave the way for dictatorship or group domination. Democracy believes in compromise and adjustment and the demand for State intervention comes to be justified provided it is within limits. Though the State protects civil liberty against interference by any single organ of government or individuals, it always possesses the power to limit and abridge or even destroy civil liberty. (579 words)

17. Is the pen mightier than the sword ? (WBCS '72)

From time immemorial a sword has often been known to be a source of power. It has struck terror into the heart of the enemy or even vanquished him. Evils have been set right and many an old score settled with the help of a sword. For ages, it has stood as a symbol of power and justice on earth. The flashy swords of the Mughals and the Rajputs in India once felled kingdoms like trees and established newer and mightier ones in their place. But where are they now ? Silently laid aside amidst the ruins of time they now live as silent memories of the dim past. Take the case of Ashoka, the great emperor who waded through the stream of blood at the fierce battle of Kalinga to reach for his victory. His glory no doubt lives through the centuries, not for his fierce win at the end of his sword, but for his deathless message inscribed on the stones.

The glory of the sword is in the blood it has spilt, the

cities it has razed to the ground, But when a great writer wields his pen he has much more to give the world than even any great warrior. A writer's role is creative, not destructive. It is the language of the pen and not the language of the sword that gives us new values, new standards, new hopes to live with. Alexander and Napoleon may be forgotten but Vyasa, Valmiki, Homer will be remembered with deep devotion for all ages to come. Although the prowess and suzerainty of the mighty British Empire (where the sun never set) is on the wane, the great English empire of Shakespeare continues to stretch its limits. Hoardes of Lord Clives, Nelsons and Duke of Wellingtons lie low in the obscure pages of history, but a Hamlet and a Macbeth live as great living heroes in the minds of countless people all over the world, who are willing vassals, to the kingdom of Shakespeare. The Empire built on the ruthless exercise of the sword has yielded place to the literary empire built with the pen.

We cannot forget how Rabindranath Tagore struck terror into the heart of the unfeeling British rulers by his letter of protest on the Jalianwalla Bagh massacre. If the swords can murder and inflict wound, so can the words that flow from the pen of men of genius. Pope's satires and Epistles could spill from his victims drops of blood and tears like the fencing swords.

The sword is mighty so far as the physical life is concerned, but the pen is mightier because it can even conquer beyond the limits of the physical existence. Where the fury of the sword has failed to bring a rebel or a sinner on his knees, a poem or a story has often done it quietly and effectively. And in the midst of terror and sorrow, wound and woes, a soldier even lays aside his sword to pen down a few moving lines for his beloved or his ailing mother. That has given us a better account of war—a better consolation for all who outlive the dead. Wars have been fought and won or even lost, with the dead buried under the thick layer of dust. But the poetry of the trenches throbs the hearts that once lived and loved to be unhappily bayonnetted to death and makes the soldier's undying heart win over the senseless massacre. (580 words)

18. Should vast sums of money be spent on Space exploration ? (WBCS '72)

In December, 1968, atop the Saturn-5, the world's most powerful rocket, the Apollo-8 craft was launched from Cape Kennedy, Florida, to carry men for the first time to the Moon. Its inmates Col. Frank Borman, Capt James Lovell and Major William Anders made new history of space exploration. It was the first time that man had escaped the earth's gravity and passing through the void of space orbited the moon and returned safe on earth. This achievement of the U. S. space research has been described as a feat that staggers the imagination and defies the comprehension of man. Two astronauts, Neil Armstrong and Col. Edwin Aldrin of Apollo-11 actually set foot on the Moon on 22nd July 1969. Thereafter several 'Apollo's and other spacecrafts have been sent up to the Moon and to other Planets by the U. S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. This success in space exploration has been possible by the labour and skill of about 350,000 scientists, engineers and technicians and spending of millions and millions of dollars over a decade. Even the U.S.S.R. which opened the space age earlier than America putting its Sputnik I into orbit is not lagging behind in carrying on researches on space explorations. Soviet Luna-16 also showed a space marvel when it soft-landed on the Moon on 20.9.70 and collected moon-rocks and by unmanned relaunching returned to earth. How much money they care to spend on space research is anybody's guess. It is shocking to believe that the Capitalist America and the Socialist Soviet Union are both vying with each other in space research, indulging in spectacular scientific feats at the unbelievable cost of huge sums of money, when millions of hungry people in underdeveloped countries of the world go unfed and many more unclothed. Is it not shameful on the part of a developed country like America to drain away millions of dollars when she cannot do away with her slums and housing problems ?

Of course, the sampling of the lunar soil or rocks to explore into the mystery of-creation is a laudable scientific feat which

has hardly any parallel in human history. Setting up of space-research laboratory is another magnificent technical achievement which will pave the way to the exploration of the mystery of the Universe. The use of spacecraft for the inter-continental tele-communication purposes has already proved to be highly beneficial to men.

The cost on Apollo almost equals the annual U. S. expenditure on the Vietnam War. A day's trip to Moon costs a fantastic amount of about 350 million dollars. Unmanned Satellites are ushering in a great technological knowledge in Oceanography, geology, agriculture, forestry, geography and other related fields. This will lead to the discovery of new mineral water and food resources. In weather forecasting, Satellites have already proved their immense value.

But inspite of all these achievements, should we not strike a balance between the over-ambitious scientific projects for space exploration and the essential development projects undertaken for the well-being of the suffering millions ? Which comes first, human welfare or scientific experiment ? Should science gallop away over the corpses of the ill-fed and the ill-clad ? These are the vital questions that stare into the face of man. Considering the properties of life, huge sums of money should not be spent on space research, since the essential projects of so many underdeveloped or developing countries are lying unexecuted in want of adequate finance. A substantial portion of the money invested in space-research can be diverted to underdeveloped countries in the form of aid to alleviate their miseries.

(583 words)

19. Has the foreign policy of India been effective ?

(WBCS '72)

A country's foreign policy very often decides her destiny. Except for a brief spell of a few years under the influence of Nehru's towering personality, India has not gained decisively from her foreign policy. She, no doubt, played a glorious role in the Commonwealth as well as the World Body in the early years of her independence. Most of the countries in Asia even looked forward to India for guidance and assurance.

Those were the days of 'Panchasil', whose chief architect was Nehru himself. Her policy of neutrality also paid dividends as much as her directive principles of peaceful co-existence.

But very soon India came to minimise the importance of her neighbours, both in terms of peace and war. She came to be oblivious of the developments in the countries adjoining her borders. This under-estimation led to the fracas with China and latter's betrayal, which almost unsettled the entire planning for India's future development. She learnt from her confrontation with China and Pakistan that she should be strong militarily as well as economically, to speak from the vantage ground of strength and not of mere hollow idealism. This realization came late and it almost broke the idealist-statesman Nehru, who all the time worked for peace and economic prosperity of the developing countries of the world. Playing safe between the two opposite camps America and the U.S.S.R and their satellites was no doubt a wise policy so far as India's interests were concerned. But at certain stages it became too evident from her relations-with the giants that she was not given her due weight in times of crisis. Occasionally, India was given to realize that she must work according to the advice of her 'patrons', even tailor her plans or economy when they considered it worth-while. She had to digest the truth of this bitter pill over the years of her trials and tribulations.

For a time, India's reluctance to take the developing Asian countries into confidence, or her over-confidence spelt the doom of her foreign policy in the East as well as in the Middle-East. She was often looked upon as an arrogant neighbour by the Asian Countries. This eroded the fund of goodwill India had once built up among the neighbours. China not only turned out to be her arch enemy in secret alliance with the hostile neighbour Pakistan, but also she weaned other Asian countries away from India. But the Chinese aggression had put India, at last, on the alert. She stepped her defence productions and relied more on indigenous materials. Her food production almost reached the target of self-sufficiency with the 'Green Revolution'. Along with it India's stability at home achieved with Mrs. Indira Gandhi's leadership,

provided her the launching pad for a more positive policy. She took courage in her hands, stood by Bangladesh in her distress, against the persistent threats of the U. S. A. and China, and set a new record in the world history by helping a new independent country to emerge. The defeat of the Pakistani Army though fully equipped with modern sophisticated arms and supported by U. S. A. and China and other Middle-East Countries, in the hands of India in course of 14 days placed India in high esteem. The Indo-Soviet Treaty for mutual friendship and co-operation was a bold step in her foreign policy and this emboldened her to face the U. S. threats with nuclear-powered Seventh Fleet approaching the Bay of Bengal in support of Pakistan. This meant for India not only a military victory but also the success of her foreign policy. She could now prove to be a strong, peace-loving nation believing in the right of a people's self-determination. (610 words)

20. Should a developing country maintain neutrality in foreign policy ? (WBCS '75)

The developing countries or the under-developed countries are those countries which have in general real per capita income less than a quarter of the per capita income of the United States or similar other affluent countries. An under-developed economy is characterised by the co-existence of unutilised or under-utilised manpower on the one hand and of unexploited natural resources on the other. The enormous gap between the living standards, unequal distribution of wealth and income, growing economic dependence of the poor on the rich nations and concentration of international trade in a few commodities in poor countries pose a great problem in achieving a sizeable level of development in the under-developed countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Besides these, food and economic aid are becoming political weapon in the hands of the affluent nations such as the U. S. which command the resources and technical know-how.

Since the foreign policy is closely associated with the economic policy of a country, the developing countries would need adoption of neutrality and non-alignment as their foreign

policy in the interest of promoting their developments. For economic recovery and industrial development, the developing countries would require machinery and know-how from some developed countries. So long they maintain neutrality and do not join hands with any Power Bloc, doors will remain open to them for procuring all their requirements from the sophisticated countries. Moreover by maintaining absolute neutrality, they can minimise the defence expenditure and divert that money for development of the country. Neutrality is a form of isolation in international affairs and is characterized by abstinence from involvement in political and military conflicts of other nations while non-alignment implies aloofness from military blocs. The bulk of the Afro-Asian countries, including India, which have achieved their independence since the Second World War, are non-aligned. By remaining out of military alliances they hope to remain free to pursue independent foreign policies on each issue as it arises and to divert their limited resources for economic development instead of for manufacturing armaments.

The super-Powers are dominating the world. Most of the outstanding world disputes cannot be resolved because the super-Powers are not agreed over their solution. The non-aligned groups of developing countries constitute the Third World and they comprise 87.5 p. c. of the world population and possess 70 p. c. of the natural resources in the world, but their share in the total world industry is less than 7 p. c. Non-aligned nations can only appeal to the conscience of the Great Powers. But still they constitute a kind of third force and the Great Powers generally are anxious to create a favourable impression on their minds and not to antagonise them. Neutral nations can also supply U. N.'s peace-keeping forces.

India's policy of non-alignment has withstood its acid test. Even when India's independence was at stake due to aggression of China and Pakistan, she did not, even for a moment, think of losing her neutrality and non-alignment. India's leadership to the non-aligned blocs and her championing the cause of liberation of smaller, weaker and oppressed nations of Asia and Africa both raised her prestige and honour and at the same time

made a number of enemies amongst Great and small powers, coming from all points it can be said that maintaining neutrality in foreign policy is beneficial for the developing countries.

Ancient and modern education. (WBCS '72)

In the Western countries education of boys and girls is no longer confined to the lecture theatres alone. Monotony of lectures has been very much minimised by out-door work and group work which generate healthy curiosity and interest in the minds of students. Moreover, especially the Documentaries, are the richest sources of information with entertainment value. They liberally contribute to advancement of learning by their spectacular effect on the tender minds of students.

But the limit which the academic institutions usually show to film is that it is mostly related to the lessons of lecture systematically. What about films which constitute the weekly entertainment of people in the cities? Do they have any value whatsoever in educating the masses? One need not feel over-extended over the question. It is quite a commonplace experience for every cinema-goer to have several minutes of news and views on the screen before he catches up with the film of the show. Why hilly he finds himself on the track of national and international events. This, beyond doubt, provides him with a kind of education which he receives almost without any ado. As for the film which entertains him and takes crudely of his daily life, there may legitimately be ground enough for differences of opinion. So we after all care to get ourselves educated with the help of films? Per me no one denying the fact that a film of Satyajit Ray, Chhaya Upadhyay and Walt Disney leaves us happier, wiser and more humane after the show. Just as a great work of art enlightens as well as entertains, a good film by a talented director not only throws light on human life but also sharpens our intellect and imaginative vision. Could there be more effective documents of human understanding than Father Panthare's old Lhasa Lhasa on the screen? And think of the highly challenging film-version of 'Dr. Zhivago' or the film representing the highly sensitive pro-

blem of colour-bar and the hazards of glazing in the interiors of Wild Africa or the explorations in the Polar region or the conquering of the space and so on. There could be lists without end of such educative films. Not to speak of a Shakespeare play on the screen with all its splendour, enlivened all the more by the peerless acting of Laurence Olivier, but also of a perceptive film by Mrinal Sen, throwing into relief the problems of ordinary men, their aspirations and ideas of morality that highlights the invaluable education the films can successfully offer.

Yet, who can gainsay the disastrous effects of film on the unripe adolescents. Some films are bad enough to spoil the youthful mind, some even coolly derogatory to the interests of the society, although there are quite a legion which serve as a good means of education for the masses. In some cases, however, the films serve a negative educative value, while in others it is rather difficult to stand the silly shows with the line aesthetic sense of the visitor. Besides, the crime pictures and the sexy pictures do immense harm to the society and lead the film-addicts astray and even induce them to imitate those anti-social activities of the villain-heroes of those films in their own life. And the number of such films is quite large and their popularity in box offices can be well imagined. The root of the present student unrest and indiscipline in the society can be traced to some extent in this type of films. Still on working out a balance-sheet of the harm and the benefit catered by the films, it must be admitted that the educative value of the films is weighty. (609 words)

22. Does international competition in sport foster good will among nations? (WBCS 73)

Every living being is engaged in a grim struggle for existence. Competition and rivalry are common to both the animal kingdom and the plant kingdom. Human life is full of competitions in every sphere of life we have to meet certain competitions. In fact, the life of a modern man may be regarded as a series of competitive tests in different forms.

Competition in most of the spheres of life breeds jealousy and other bad impulses. There is only one sphere of life in which competitive spirit does not give rise to any bad impulses. Competitive activities in the playground are free from unhealthy feelings.

In order to explain why international competition in games and sports fosters goodwill among nations it is necessary to examine the role of games and sports in our life. Games and sports teach us many good lessons. A sportsman learns to obey the rules of the games and the orders of the captain. A sportsman always discharges his duties sincerely. On the playground each player has his allotted duty to perform. He considers it to be his duty to help in winning games by following the instructions of the captain. Games and sports help us acquire the will to win. Life is a hurdle race. The sportsman courageously takes up arms against the troubles of life. He takes victory and defeat in the same spirit. If he is defeated, the true sportsman does not become depressed or disappointed. He knows that he may win tomorrow. Sports also make us conscious of the value of team spirit. The greatest harmony prevails on the playground. Individual excellence is always admirable but in a game of football or cricket team spirit is more important. Thus we are convinced that the lessons learnt on the playground make us good citizens and delightful companions.

Now let us consider the role of games and sports in international relations. In the present age science has made wonderful developments in the transport system. So we live today in a narrower world. Artists of one country go to another country to foster friendship between the two nations. But sportsmen play the most important part in international understanding.

Nowdays international competition in sports has become very common. Players of one country frequently go to play in another country. Thus cricketers of different countries come to India every year and test matches are held in important cities. Again, Olympic games are held once in four years. Competitors from different countries assemble at the Olympic

stadium and participate in sports in a disciplined manner. A sportsman in the Olympic stadium looks upon himself as a citizen of the world. The Olympic stadium levels all distinction between sportsmen and symbolizes universal brotherhood. Olympic games and sports foster friendship and goodwill among nations. But it must be admitted that sometimes international competition in sports creates bad blood, and leads to the sacrifice of sportsmanship to the greed of money or the passion for national superiority. In the Olympic sports of 1972 certain unhappy incidents occurred. Then we have to remember that nothing is perfect under the sun. In all branches of sports, now international games are held and it is through these games and sports that different Nations come closer to one another inspite of their political differences. Perhaps the most significant development in the field of international relation was achieved through sport in April '71 when a US table-tennis team visited the People's Republic of China thereby breaking the Sino-American hostility of more than two decades. This pingpong game played the role of an instrument of international diplomacy and brought about a refreshing break in a dreary stalemate in the Sino-American relations

From the above discussion we may arrive at the conclusion that international competition in sports fosters goodwill among nations. (632 words)

**23. Has advertising become a menace in
our daily life ? (WBCS '73)**

Advertising is the way of letting the customers know the existence and utility of particular goods or commodities. As a profession advertising is young, but as a force it is as old as the world. Perhaps the professional cry of the hawker is the simplest form of advertising. With the growth of business and multiplication of types of commodities for sale, and above all, concentration of a great many people in particular regions, advertising has become a strong force in the world of today.

In the present age the technique of advertisement is becoming more and more sophisticated and creating diversity of taste. The streets of big cities are lined with advertisements.

Posters, window displays and neon signs dazzle our eyes when we go to the commercial centres of a city like Calcutta. They make the cities beautiful. Now-a-days newspapers, radio and cinema have become the most popular media of advertising. They have made advertising a form of art. Big business houses employ artists to make beautiful advertisements. Many artists receive training for this purpose.

Advertising has many uses. It increases production and thereby reduces manufacturing and marketing costs. It stimulates demands by bringing commodities to the notice of the customers. It creates a stable market. It enables us to purchase the best thing at reasonable price. In fact, advertising has now become the soul of trade and commerce.

However, it must be admitted that advertising has certain bad aspects. It is an appendage of capitalist society. It is partly responsible for increase in prices of goods. It enables dishonest businessmen to sell their sub-standard goods. Sometimes advertised articles do us much harm. For example, a man may become a drug-addict by seeing catchy advertisements of medicines. Again, cinema advertisements may tempt a student to enjoy film shows regularly. Innocent people are often cheated by some very lucrative offers given through attractive advertisements in Newspapers and Radio.

In our country advertising is still in its infancy but it has already become a menace in our everyday life. In the post-Independence period India has become a paradise of unscrupulous businessmen. They sell worthless goods by glittering publicity. Advertisements confuse us; we do not know what we should choose. Most of the advertisements in our country appeal to raw instincts of consumers. Sex is exploited in the newspaper advertisements. Our cinema advertisements are very offensive. Scenes of lovers locked in embrace appear frequently in the cinema advertisements as well as in the newspaper advertisements. Advertisements of cabaret shows appear in the daily newspapers. Containers of many goods depict naked women in sometimes details of the sexual act are given in advertisements of contraceptives. All these advertisements corrupt the minds of sub young boys and girls. New and deceptive

gentleman cannot read newspapers before him children because they are full of pictures of naked women. We do not understand why a box of biscuits or chocolates should depict a naked woman. Most of the advertisements in our country show perverted tastes. Advertisements in form of film shows are displayed on roadside public places in such an attractive fashion that they almost border vulgarity.

Advertising is looked upon as an art in many western countries. Unfortunately in India it is not treated as an art. Here it is used as a convenient weapon by unscrupulous businessmen. Hence it has become a menace in our daily life.

24. ~~Should capital punishment be abolished?~~ ~~It is a very important question.~~ Capital punishment is the extreme penalty for certain forms of crime entailing danger to society or otherwise impairing its life and impeding its progress. Military authorities of all countries consider it necessary for maintaining discipline in the battle field. Civil authorities of many countries inflict this form of punishment on criminals who commit heinous crimes. In Russia this particular form of punishment is very common. Before Independence Nehru threatened to hang dishonest businessmen from the nearest lamp post. But in free India capital punishment is seldom inflicted on criminals.

Capital punishment has to be considered in its relation to the concept of punishment in general. So first of all let us consider the different theories of punishment. Three principal theories of punishment have been put forward. These are known as the preventive, the reformatory and the retributive theories. The first view is that the aim of punishment is to deter others from committing similar crimes. If we accept this view it seems probable that, with the development of the moral consciousness, punishment would speedily be abolished because it could scarcely be regarded as just to inflict punishment on one citizen merely for the benefit of others. The second view is that the aim of punishment is to reform the criminal himself. This theory seems to fit in best with the humanitarian

sentiments of the modern age. It suggests that in many cases kind treatment would have a better effect than punishment. The third view is that the aim of punishment is to allow a criminal's deed to return on his own head. This theory of punishment seems to rest on the pagan passion of revenge. Hegel's theory of punishment is another version of the retributive theory.

Now we have to consider whether the sovereignty of the state imply such authority on the lives of its citizens that it is entitled to inflict extreme penalty under certain circumstances, and whether the idea of crime and its punishment requires that the criminal should be made under certain circumstances to forfeit even his life as a just retribution for his crimes.

It may be argued that when a man commits a cold-blooded murder for mere gain without any extenuating circumstances, society is justified in claiming his life as a compensation. This is the argument of the '*lex talionis*' that is, the law of retaliation, an eye for an eye, and leads to what is known as the retributive theory of punishment.

We do not agree with the view that the State has the right to inflict capital punishment on a man who commits a murder for the following reasons. When the State poses as avenger and exacts the extreme penalty on behalf of the victim, it arrogates to itself the right of ownership which never belongs to it. The loss of the life of a citizen is not made good by adding to it another, and the summary execution of the criminal, though it may ensure the prevention of crime, means yet the loss of another citizen to the State. Countries like Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and West Germany abolished capital punishment or allowed it to fall into disuse. Even Britain abolished death penalties with effect from Dec. 1969. There is no reason why we cannot follow the same policy.

Capital punishment is a monstrosity and its survival is unworthy of a civilized humanity. The only valid meaning of punishment in our imperfect world is reformation not retribution, and capital punishment as the negation of the offender is the negation of the very possibility of reform. So

we arrive at the conclusion that in our civilized society capital punishment should be put to disuse, if not totally abolished immediately. (620 words)

25. Should men and women compete in the same fields of employment ? (WBCS '67, '74)

Or, Changing patterns of women's employment in India (IAS '76)

In ancient times women were not allowed to do work outside their homes. They did only domestic work. It is interesting to note that the domineering male has through the ages monopolised most of the amenities and facilities of life, denying the female her rightful shares. In the Middle Ages women could not think of doing outdoor work for lack of security. But in the modern age the picture has totally changed. With the growth of individualism among women in the democratic age, they are refusing to submit meekly to overbearing mastery of the menfolk.

Now-a-days we find women employees in all offices and factories. The acute economic crisis of our age has compelled women to seek jobs outside their homes. Now a question arises : Are women fit for all types of jobs ? Many women claim to have capacity for the traditional masculine jobs. Thus the number of women willing to join administrative and police services is increasing every year. But there is no denying that a female constable is less efficient than a male one. Women administrators are handicapped in many ways. There are certain jobs which demand expressly masculine qualities. For example, the military services are not meant for women. Women cannot undergo the hardships of army life. They seldom display the fighting spirit. We cannot also think of a woman handling heavy machineries. Women are not suitable for jobs which involve risks. How many women would like to become guards of goods trains ? So all jobs are not for women.

Women are weak by nature, but they are soft and tender-hearted and their hearts are full of love and sympathy. Women are well-equipped for certain jobs. Teaching in the primary stage is undoubtedly woman's job. Women have

special aptitude for teaching children. A kindergartener, mistress, can easily teach children the letters of the alphabet with love and care. Male teachers are likely to lose patience when young children refuse to learn their lessons readily. Nursing is essentially woman's job. Men can never shine in the nursing profession. A woman's love and sympathy can save the lives of many dying patients in a hospital. Jobs which involve no risks are suitable for women. That is why most of the telephone operators, announcers, typists and receptionists are women. In attending a precision instrument, feminine fingers are more suited than the big masculine hands of men. In employment, particularly where mental faculties are of greater importance than the physical strength, men and women are to be treated as equals. From the above discussion it follows that men and women are not equally fit for all types of jobs. Jobs which involve hardships and risks are suitable for men, while those which require patience and care are suitable for women. Now-a-days unemployment has become an acute problem. Men and women are equally eager to secure jobs. They do not consider seriously whether they will have to face various difficulties if they choose a particular profession. Thus a woman, who is cut out for nursing, cannot enjoy her work if she becomes a typist. A society in which many men and women choose wrong jobs cannot make good progress in any sphere. We have to admit that Nature has made men and women different. The mental make-up and physical capacity of a man cannot be the same as those of a woman. So men and women should move in their proper spheres. They should not compete in the same fields of employment.

26. Would you like to be a District Magistrate or a Member of the State Planning Board? (WBCS 74)

I am an active young man and I cherish some human values. I want to do some creative work. I am afraid that it will not be possible for me to do any creative work if I am made a member of the State Planning Board. I know it fully well. The members of the State Planning Board have power to shape the

destiny of our State? But I do not believe in the efficacy of good advice and suggestions. So I do not aspire to become a member of the State Planning Board.

I am very eager to secure the job of a District Magistrate. This job has a special charm for me. I am a lover of freedom. I know that a District Magistrate enjoys freedom. Though he has to obey Ministers and Secretaries, the District Magistrate is the supreme authority in the district. All the administrative officers of the district work under him. He is the monarch of all the surveys. Indeed, there are very few restrictions on his freedom. I like the job of a District Magistrate because I wish to do responsible administrative work. The District Magistrate is the pivot of the administrative machinery. He is responsible for all affairs of his district. He makes extensive tours in different areas of the district to gather information about the people's difficulties. He takes the initiative in all developmental works of the district. When a natural calamity or an epidemic disorder causes human suffering, he has to take proper steps for checking the evil. Thus, when drought conditions prevail, he has to organize relief operations. I like the job of a District Magistrate because I wish to play an important role in the social and cultural life of a district. The District Magistrate takes the initiative in social works of his area. He plays a very important role in the educational and cultural life of the district. He is the ex-officio President of the governing bodies of all schools and colleges in the district. Thus he can make the academic life of his district vigorous. He presides over various functions in schools and colleges and sees for himself the difficulties of students and teachers. He helps the educational institutions secure financial aid from the government. Sometimes the District Magistrate takes the initiative in establishing academic institutions in his area. Thus District Magistrate organizes cultural activities in the district. While the functions of the State Planning Board are more of less advisory in respect of the Plan programme for the State, the effective performance of these schemes in a district depends on the efficient supervision and administration of a District Magistrate. I have offered some arguments in favour of my decision.

to secure the job of a District Magistrate, I am by nature allergic towards government service because I believe that it tends to make a man dull and slavish. But I aspire to become a District Magistrate as this job does not deprive a man of his freedom. There is enough power in the hands of a District Magistrate and I wish to use it for the good of the people. I dislike the monotonous duties of bureaucrats, but I like the creative functions of a District Magistrate. Nobody can persuade me to become a member of the State Planning Board as its advisory functions without any power do not suit my temperament. I am sure that I shall enjoy my work if I am appointed a District Magistrate. (582 words)

27 (i) Who has benefitted mankind more—the statesman or the scientist ? (WBCS '73)

Let us first understand the position of a statesman. A statesman combines the qualities of political philosopher and a practical politician. He is interested in different types of political theories. Sometimes he propounds a theory of his own. He hopes to do some good to his countrymen. But he cannot get an opportunity of serving his countrymen unless he proves himself an effective politician. So he devotes his time and energy to political activities in his country in the hope of securing a position for himself. He can guide the destinies of his countrymen when he becomes the President or the Prime Minister of his country. A man who has imagination and good intentions can do a lot of good work for his country. But he loses some of his good qualities when he tries to capture political power.

The statesman, as a head of government or administration, can establish law and order in the country, solve the unemployment problem and can achieve all round development of the country thus bringing peace, prosperity and happiness amongst the people. By extending patronage to scientific researches, he can help furtherance of discoveries and inventions. Thus in a way the statesman wields greater power than the scientists and can render more service to the people if he holds benevolent ideals. On the other hand if he is ill-

motivated, he can force the scientists in devising lethal weapons with devastating effects.

But power has a demoralizing effect. Power corrupts a man, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Most of the statesmen indulge in power politics and ultimately fail to do the things which their countrymen expect from them.

A statesman who has a broad outlook and an original approach to international problems can well guide the destiny of mankind. Unfortunately most of them remain more concerned with their national interests. The world has seen two great wars in the present century. Those wars were born of the selfish interests and ambitions of statesmen. So we cannot say that statesmen are true benefactors of mankind.

Now let us turn to the scientist. A scientist is a true worshipper of the goddess of knowledge. He leads a dedicated life. He devotes all his time and energy to exploration of truth. He works for the welfare of humanity. A scientist is a citizen of the world. His work has international significance.

In the present age scientists have appeared as true benefactors of mankind. Our life has become comfortable on account of their discoveries. In every sphere of life we find the scientists busy doing research work for the good of mankind. Scientists have made tremendous progress in medical science. The 'transplantation' operations save the lives of many dying men. Science has helped man to harness the potentialities of Nature and thereby enabled man to lead a prosperous and comfortable life.

There is no denying that in the two world wars science played a destructive role. The question arises: were the scientists responsible for destruction of human lives and property during those wars? Every student of history knows that statesmen were responsible for the wars. The statesmen compelled the scientists of their countries to make powerful weapons. Now scientists of America and Russia are making sophisticated nuclear weapons. But at the same time they are sending rockets to different planets. Scientists have to follow the dictates of statesmen. If the statesmen of powerful countries decide to put an end to wars, their scientists will cease to

produce instruments of destruction and devote themselves to welfare activities.

Summing up, we may say that the contribution of the scientist to the welfare of mankind is greater than that of the statesman.

27 (ii) Who renders greater service to the nation—a poet or a politician? (WBCS-74)

In the present age the politicians are the architects of a nation's destiny. They guide the citizens in all spheres of their lives. As members of State Assemblies or the Parliament they formulate rules and regulations for the administration of their country. They work sincerely for the welfare of their countrymen. During a war, they determine military policies and try their best to achieve peace.

From the above discussion it appears to us that a politician renders great service to the nation. But now-a-days a politician seldom shows the spirit of dedication. A modern politician is a very powerful man. We know that power corrupts a man and absolute power corrupts absolutely. A politician of our age is a selfish, power-hungry man. He knows well how to earn money. He is not interested in public welfare. He occupies an important post and sees to it that his friends and relatives get numerous opportunities. Sometimes he exploits young boys and girls for his personal security and political gain. Indeed Dr. Johnson was not wrong when he described politics as the last resort of the scoundrel.

Now let us think of a poet and consider his role in the society. We know the proverb—The pen is mightier than the sword. The poet's weapon is his pen. He writes or composes poems in order to convey his message to his countrymen. Sometimes he wishes to spread his message to the whole human race. As Shelley says—

Scatter, as from an extinguished hearth,
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind;
Be through my lips to unawakened earth
The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Matthew Arnold rightly described the poets as un-
 knowledgeable legislators of the world. Indeed, a poet is a true
 legislator of his country because he prepares the minds of his
 countrymen for the reception of progressive legislation. Good
 seeds may be imported, but they will not sprout if the soil is
 not properly ploughed. So a politician may bring progressive
 ideas from foreign countries, but his ideas will not produce
 good results unless and until a poet makes the citizens
 progressive in their outlook with his poetry. A great poet can
 inspire his countrymen to march on the road to progress.
 During a war the poet composes patriotic songs to inspire his
 countrymen to win victories in the battlefield. Tagore and
 Nazrul inspired our freedom-fighters with their immortal
 patriotic songs. In their recent war of liberation the Bangladeshi
 soldiers derived much inspiration from Tagore's famous
 patriotic songs. So it is seen that a poet shapes the destiny of
 his nation in his own way.

Both the politician and the poet serve the nation, but there
 is a great difference between the services of the former and
 those of the latter. A politician promotes the material welfare
 of a nation on a limited scale. A poet, on the other hand,
 helps the intellectual and spiritual progress of his nation. A
 great poet has power to save a nation from intellectual and
 moral bankruptcy. A country which has some great poets is
 greater than a country which has some competent politicians.
 So we come to the conclusion that a poet renders greater service

to a nation than a politician. A great politician is remembered
 for some time and by certain groups and parties of his country
 but a great poet is remembered for ever and he is a treasure of
 the world at large.

(ii) **When do people need more the postman**
 on the postman in the evening (PPCS 73)

The postman is the first and last link in the long chain of
 communication with one's distant friend or relation. It is very
 interesting to learn the working system of the postman who
 connects people all over the world. When anybody posts a
 letter addressed to his friend or relation living far away in the

nearest letter-box, the local postman collects the letter from that letter-box and take them to the nearest post-office. There after sorting and stamping these letters are put into different bags meant for different places. All these bags are carried to the destination railway stations through post-office vans and mail trains and then the bags reach the nearest post-office. The bags are then opened, the letters are stamped and sorted out and made over to the postman for delivery to the addressee at his residence. That is, one postman first collects the letter from the letter-box and after it has made a long journey another postman at last delivers it to his friend or relation. Thus the entire mechanism of modern communication system is based on the services of postmen at both ends. They are part of the great system by which people in all parts of the world can keep in touch with each other. Thus the postmen render a great service to the people.

The duty of the police is to keep order and see that the law is obeyed, to find out crimes and arrest criminals, and to protect life and property. They have also other duties such as looking after the traffic in city streets, to find out the missing persons, to control mass rally and processions as well as unruly mob. The only weapon a policeman carries is his "truncheon" or a short club or cudgel as a symbol of law and order. He uses it very sparingly inasmuch as his very appearance on the spot helps stopping the crimes and rouses fear in the minds of the miscreants. Some of them who have to face dangerous criminals are allowed to carry revolvers.

It may seem strange that people obey a single policeman. When he puts up his hand on the road, carriages and motor cars must stop. When he arrests a man, the man generally obeys, though he knows the policeman is unarmed. The reason for this is that the single policeman has all the force of the law behind him. People are not afraid of him as a man; but they are afraid of the great power of the law that he stands for. So a few unarmed policemen are able to keep order, as a rule, and keep us and our houses safe. Even the common policemen are well disciplined and trained hands. Their kindness to people in trouble, their good humour in managing large crowds, their

courage, and their good work deserve appreciation and admiration from all.

Lastly it may be said that we need the services of a postman occasionally but the services of the policemen are required everyday and at every moment, directly or indirectly. As soon as we feel the presence of a policeman in the vicinity, who might be available at call, we feel ourselves quite secure and fearless. Thus the need of a policeman is more than that of a postman.

(550 words)

28. Which is 'more difficult to learn—Mathematics or a foreign language? And which is more interesting?

(WBCS '74)

We live in an age of science. Some of the important branches of science are based on Mathematics. Thus a sound knowledge of Mathematics is necessary for mastering Physics. Even a student of Economics, which is a social science, requires some knowledge of Mathematics. So we have to acquire some knowledge of Mathematics in order to learn the modern sciences. However, it is not difficult to learn Mathematics. We know the proverb—Genius is more perspiration than inspiration. This proverb applies remarkably well to a mathematician. A student of Mathematics should be very regular in his habits. He must work out sums regularly. Constant practice is the secret of a mathematician's success. Indeed, Mathematics can be easily mastered by anybody who is prepared to make regular cerebral exercise. But proficiency in mathematics cannot be acquired unless one has knack or mental acumen for the subject. Thus a good number of students are afraid of mathematics as they cannot go deep into the subject or solve the problems correctly and feel themselves bored with the subject.

The scope for learning foreign languages is also very limited. The mastering of foreign languages is, by and large, a difficult task, although all foreign languages are not equally difficult to learn. For example, it is easier to learn English than German because German grammar is more complicated than English grammar. A student who is imaginative and industrious

E. E. & C.—4

can learn a foreign language. A matter-of-fact student can learn Mathematics, but he cannot master a foreign language. A literary bent of mind is essential for a good command of a foreign language. No foreign language can be learnt mechanically. Students of our country learn English from a very early stage. Most of them devote a greater part of their time to the study of English. But the majority of our students fail in English. This clearly proves that it is difficult to learn a foreign language. Every serious student can learn Mathematics, but even a talented student has to face great difficulty in learning a foreign language. Mathematics depends on the right application of set formulae but any command in foreign language would require a thorough knowledge in the syntax and vocabulary of that language as well as some literary acumen.

Now let us consider which is more interesting—Mathematics or a foreign language. Most of the students will readily admit that a foreign language is more interesting than Mathematics. Everybody dislikes mechanical work. Study of Mathematics is undoubtedly dull and boring. A student of Mathematics is required to remember a large number of formulae and theorems. He has to apply them rigidly again and again. So he is apt to become bored. A student, who learns a foreign language, is never bored. The language of a nation faithfully represents its character. It is a rich storehouse of knowledge. A student, who masters a foreign language, comes in contact with a nation whose culture is different from his own. Study of a foreign language broadens one's outlook on life. It is an inexhaustible source of pleasure. Now-a-days many people learn foreign languages. Students of our country learn English, French, German and Russian carefully. In many European countries students learn oriental languages. Moreover those, who visit foreign countries, try to learn those foreign languages for convenience. So we come to the conclusion that a foreign language is more interesting than Mathematics.

(565 words)

**29. In what circumstances do you think that police
or troops are justified in firing a mob ?**

(WBCS '67)

Police firing has recently been a subject of much controversy in our country. During the British regime the police or the troops opened fire on a mob whenever they liked to, and they were almost always justified in the eyes of the Government. After Independence such indiscriminate use of fire arms by the police or the troops has naturally been condemned and whenever the police has chosen to open fire on the mob the moral justification of such an act has been sought after.

Opinions almost always differ on the question of justification for firing on a mob. There are people who always side with the mob. There are persons again who would always take up the cudgels for the police or the troops. Both these groups are, however, too prejudiced to be right. When the police opens fire on a mob there is always something to say for both the sides. We have to find out for which side we can say most without distorting the facts.

It is a common human psychology that we would side with the mob more readily than with the police. The considerations that lead us to sympathise with the mob are that they have no such powerful weapons as the police and the troops have, that it is they who mostly get injured or killed and that we also could be among the injured or the killed.

Indeed, there are occasions when the police or the troops are really justified in firing upon a mob. It is not for nothing that they are provided with weapons. Their duty is to preserve law and order and if this necessitates opening fire on the mob they should not scruple to carry out the task. Law and order ought to be maintained at any cost, even at the cost of a few lives. Of course, firing should be used by the police or the troops as the last resort when all other measures like lathi charges, tear-gas shells etc. fail to have the desired effect in controlling the unruly mob.

The police or the troops are certainly justified in opening fire for self-defence. Quite often we read in the newspapers of people attacking the police. They throw stones and even crackers and bombs and there are occasions when some of the policemen get seriously injured or killed. If the police do not

open fire even then, it will be difficult to maintain law and order in the country.

Sometimes the mob runs amack. They start indulging in all sorts of unsocial activities. They damage public and personal properties, they ransack shops, they burn buses and even assault innocent men and women, as is seen in the case of communal riots or in direct actions against the government. Under such circumstances the police and the trodops are quite justified in firing on the mob to stop arson, looting and killing. Only bullets then can bring the people to their senses.

Sometimes the people have no moral justification for indulging in certain activities. They indulge in these activities only because they want to defy society, which according to them has been the chief cause of their suffering. They give rise to a revolt against the accepted social and moral codes and it becomes necessary then to open fire on the unruly crowd in order that law and order may once again be restored. (563 words)

80. Can the public and the private sectors be simultaneously encouraged in a Socialist economy?

(WBCS '75)

The concept of Socialism upholds the dictum that all men are born equal and every man has an equal right to the necessities of life and that no individual enterpriser intends to promote any public interest besides his own gain. In the Socialist country, we find social ownership of the means of production and distribution. That is, the State controls the trade and commerce of these countries in its entirety. State Trading is found in Soviet Union, China and the Socialist countries of Eastern Europe. State Trading is also found in certain non-Socialist countries like U.S.A. But there is some difference between State Trading in the Capitalist countries and that in Socialist countries. State Trading is indispensable for a Socialist country since in that country the State controls the whole production and distribution systems. But in a Capitalist country, State Trading is undertaken with a definite purpose as for example, to purchase some commodities on

commercial basis or from foreign countries. The management of public enterprises nowadays is generally made through the medium of public corporations to be set up by law, in which the State holds the majority share. Similarly, a steadily increasing proportion of the activities of the private sector is now channelized through co-operatives. Though in a strictly Socialist country co-existence of the two sectors may not be allowed, in the case of a developing country, like India, which has adopted the socialistic objective as her goal, such mixed economy or co-existence of the two sectors would be the most beneficial.

Some economists regard the public and private sectors not as distinct entities but as complementary and parts of a single organisation. "Mixed Economy" was supposed to combine the best of both sectors with the dictates of social justice. Since it meant recognition of the due roles of both sectors, it was expected to be the only democratic alternative to complete State control and laissez-faire. It is true that a dynamic collaboration between the State sector and private enterprise would ensure adequate increased production which cannot be expected from a sole public sector operating in a Socialist economy. The tendency in a Socialist economy is, however, to establish a totalitarian economy in which the public sector gradually swallows the private sector and very little is left of it. But total State control and complete elimination of private enterprise are both impractical and impolitic in the current context. Large outlays invested in the public sector do not generally yield adequate returns. On the other hand the private sector is more efficient, by and large, than the public sector where there is more of bureaucratic control, red-tape and general lack of initiative. In view of this even in socialist economy, total or partial, private enterprise should be encouraged or allowed to function, of course, with certain limitations and restrictions. Unrestrained private enterprise is a social evil as in that case there may be attempts for flouting Government's directives by way of reducing their output thereby causing scarcity and consequent rise in price. Thus public sector and the private

sector, in a limited sphere, may co-exist in a Socialist economy and that would lead to a better national interest. (527 words)

31. Which is more important—technology or sociology ?
(WBCS '76)

The burning question today is which branch of knowledge—technology or sociology—is particularly suited to the modern times. Both are science ; one is the science of the industrial arts, the knowledge of the technical processes that increase productivity of machines and eliminate manual operations ; the other is the science of society, social institutions and social relationships, the systematic study of the development, structure and function of human groups conceived as processes of interaction or as organized patterns of collective behaviour. Let us analyse and discuss both of them so as to find out which one is more important than the other in the context of modern times.

The all-round development of the country since the independence of India demanded the active service of skilled labour, technicians, engineers, and surgeons and gave a great fillip to the development of industries and technical training in India. Technical schools and colleges were established and developed and a scheme for sending Indian technicians abroad for acquiring the know-how of modern developments and the use of sophisticated equipments and machinery was put through. But the number of technicians and graduates in technical education was very small in comparison with India's need for them. We have huge River Valley projects and our industries have to be developed in different directions. For the purposes of the heavy Key industries like ship-building, automobile manufacturing and locomotive industries, technical hands are the crying need of the hour. Today, the development and expansion of industries will not only serve the immediate purpose of warding off the unemployment-pestilence, but it will also fulfil a long-term plan, that of making India self-reliant and strong. Agriculture, industry, medicine, surgery, the method of warfare, means of communication, transport and human comforts have been revolutionized by science and it is through technology that man derives the benefits of these scientific

developments. So the importance of technology can hardly be over-emphasized.

Sociology is the study of the origin and evolution of society in terms of forms and functions of human groups. It is a coordinating discipline which seeks to trace the web of inter-relations between the geographic, biological, psychological, economic, political and cultural aspects of human existence. According to some, sociology includes the well established academic subjects as history, economics and political science. Sociology developed in the fields of theory and methods, in demography and human ecology concerning study of population phenomena, social psychology and social organization.

Should we therefore be guided by technical education alone which brings to our doors mundane comforts and pleasures? Should there be no scope for studying, for its own sake, the society in which we live, the literature that gives expression to the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, the dreams and dilemmas of our mortal life? In short, should education always be employment oriented or should there be scope for liberal education too, for pursuing a course of studies for no other reason than the pleasure it affords? The dignity and greatness of man will be a misnomer if man prefers being turned into machine, shorn of his softer feelings and sentiments. We should also therefore lay stress on our study of that branch of knowledge which deals with the laws of social progress and education in philosophy, logic, metaphysics and literature that helps to the development of human minds.

It will not do thus to say that technology is superior to sociology or vice versa. Both are important and so both must co-exist in the set-up of modern Indian society.

(584 words)

32. Which is preferable for a humane city life—to have tidy streets or to allow a place on them for hawkers to make a living? (WBCS '76)

The modern age is sometimes called a speed-age, an age in which speed is the watchword. Omnibus and minibus, taxi and scooter, bicycles and motor cycles are competing with each

other on the city streets, not to speak of pedestrians trusting their feet to hurry to their places of business. Amidst the over-crowding of men and vehicles in a city like Calcutta, there are about 150000 beggars, 40000 rag-pickers and 60000 hawkers and pedlars roaming about or occupying different positions in a very disorderly way to block the passages of cars and men throughout the city. Apart from squeezing out legitimate pedestrians and normal vehicular traffic the pavement and road over-crowding now threatens the health, hygiene and morals of Calcutta. Road accidents are increasing. Putrefying garbage piles up as vendors scatter their rotting mounds of fruit, vegetables and packing materials. Thus the problem of beggars and hawkers stands in the way of beautifying our city street, of our 'Keep Calcutta clean' programme.

What then is to be done ? Are we to rid the roads of hawkers and beggars in our hunt for beauty ? Are we to think only of business and keep clear of the purely human side of the problem ? In short, are we to open our eyes and close our hearts ? These are intricate and embarrassing issues which demand a wise head and a feeling heart.

In view of economic depression in West Bengal villages, men and women visit the great metropolis to earn their livelihood and naturally they occupy public pavements near big Railway Stations, Road crossings, Parks and Cinema Houses, free of rentals and licence fees. There were several attempts to remove these hawkers and pedlars to certain hawkers' corners, built for the purpose, but the places vacated by them were promptly occupied by a fresh influx. The attempt was abandoned temporarily because of political unrest and on humanitarian grounds, and the State and Civic authorities are contemplating how to vacate these pavement-encroachments by rehabilitating these hawkers to some popular sites.

The need for beautification can hardly be exaggerated. Calcutta, especially its northern part, is a veritable den. Clean-roads with one-way traffic or roads with rows of flower-plants in the middle would give them quite a new look.

Footpaths, wide and clean, unblocked by unregistered wage-earners and left for pedestrians alone. would subject the city to a sea-change over-night.

Where then would the hawkers go?—Those who cannot afford to have stalls, who move from place to place, displaying prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of gewgaws, through various parts of the metropolis and are forced to earn their living amid sunshine and rain? It is a savage economic compulsion that makes a member of the low-income group to turn to this parttime job after office-hour, that makes a well-bred man shake off his shyness in playing the role of a haberdasher, a compulsion before which even a literate yonugman bows while advertising the worth and speciality of his sticks of incense. Hawking is not the birth-right of any of them, but should they be deprived of their right to live, when this seems to be the only possible way of living?

No, they should be allowed to pursue their course of livelihood. But footpaths also are to be freed from their hold, nor should the streets be allowed to be over-flooded by them. The only solution is to instal more hawker-centres and hawkers' corners at different points of this city and to induce the hawkers to shift to those places in the interest of a cleaner Calcutta. (593 words)

38. What is the more important consideration in industrial management—maximisation of production or consideration of the workers' safety and welfare? (WBCS '76,

Economic growth with social justice and stability is the keynote of India's strategy for economic development. Although maximisation of production is the ultimate object of any trade or industry, that should not in any case be obtained at the risk and cost of labour or workers engaged in that industry. That labour and capital are co-partners in industry, has been emphasized in India in numerous policy statements since 1948. The Management of big industries generally look to the relations between employers and employees as master and servant relations, For a general change in this outlook

and a better working the Indian Labour Conference of 1957 *resolved to set up joint Management Councils in industrial concerns.* They may help to establish in India the scheme of workers' participation in management. The various social security measures for industrial labour adopted by the Government of India include minimum wages, employees' provident fund, workmen's compensation Act, Maternity Benefit and Employees' State Insurance Scheme.

On the other hand when proprietors and directors and all those that have the lion's share of the profit in an industry seeking to maximise production for more profit aim at the sky as the limit and labourers, engineers and all those who directly help in the functioning of the industrial machinery have recourse to strikes and cease-work at the slightest pretexts, often an unfortunate blood-bath follows, by which neither side gains.

The true and permanent source of solution lies in a deeper understanding of a situation in which the haves and the have-nots are traditionally caught in the vortex of mutual interests and distrust. Let us look at the situation dispassionately. When someone opens a firm or a factory, his prime motive is more production and more profit. With him, the higher the production is, the greater is the return on his investment. The best result for production is possible with the best combination of land, labour and capital. The increased yield from land and machinery depends more on efficient working of labour and thus interest and welfare of labour are closely associated with the maximisation of production. The advantages of the large-scale production lie in the various ways in which labour and capital are economised and costs of production are reduced. Cheapening of costs, greater division of labour, full employment of machines and promotion of research help considerably in the increase of production and business organisers naturally run after more production and profit by fully exploiting the labour without making adequate provision for their safety and welfare. This leads to a gradual widening of the gulf between management and labourers. The organisers tend to forget that labour and capital are equal factors of

production and that the confrontation between management and labour is never conducive to the smooth running of an industry.

The series of accidents in coal mines, especially the recent disaster in Chas Nala Colliery in Dhanbad, should serve as a pointer to the fact that miners have special needs for protection against the risk of accident and the tendency to maximise the coal-mining to the last point in deeper mines aggravates the risk of explosion. Adequate precautionary measures must therefore be taken to prevent such happenings. Thus maximisation of production should be aimed at not by exploiting the labour but by satisfying the labour, by taking full care of their safety, welfare and betterment of living conditions. What is the cry of the hour is co-operation, not confrontation. It should be remembered that the workers are not part of the machinery. They are human beings and their safety and welfare would be of prime importance. (596 words)

34. **Should all education be employment-oriented,
or should there be room to explore
subjects for their own sake ?**

(WBCS '76)

Although education permeates mankind's future and the happiness of the people, experience has shown that its nature has been changing only with the passage of time as well as with places and localities. The purposes of education are threefold —(i) acquisition of a certain amount of knowledge ; (ii) requisition of culture, which includes art, literature and learning, architecture, sculpture and painting and dance, song and music ; and (iii) attainment of a suitable profession or national service. Education in pre-independence India was more a passport for entrance to Government service and it completely failed to evolve the entire personality of the child with a view to his all-round development. After the attainment of independence, the most important and urgent reform in the sphere of education was to transform it to meet the needs and aspirations of the people and to make it a powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the

realisation of national goals. But the picture of the present-day India is that a colossal mass of young men and women are annually coming out of our educational institutions and they scramble for some kind of living. When they move from door to door for months and years, when even an M. A. prays for a clerkship, when the educated unemployed look vacantly at the 'No Vacancy' signboard tagged on the office doors, when they do not get even interview letters or get letters but not the posts applied for, they start cursing the degrees acquired, indeed the whole system of education.

The gloomy picture has led educationists and politicians and sociologists to debate whether education should be employment-oriented or should there be room for pursuing a course of study for its own sake and for the very pleasure it affords, whether emphasis should be laid on technical education or liberal education.

The objective of the present-day educational reforms is to turn the students from service mentality to the awareness of the need for self-employment. In these days, when the number of offices and factories are in ill proportion to the alarming growth of population in India and an ever-increasing number of service-seeking youths, it is natural that a large portion of the literate community would be left unemployed. Hence the plan is to provide them with an elementary knowledge of various fields where they can employ themselves and thus earn their living. They can thus learn farming and agriculture, electrical and mechanical works, prepare chemicals for sale and profit. Those possessing better talents may complete higher grades of vocational training viz. Law, medical, engineering, commerce, teaching, banking, accountancy &c. Education, thus, if imparted with a view to solving the employment-problem, would make future citizens break forth into broad smiles and would dispel the darkness of despair that threatens to muffle the nation today. It will be practical and profitable.

But still we cannot totally dispense with the study of literature, philosophy and history for their own sake. If we

cling to only the practical or vocational side of education, it would debase our mental horizon.

Though stress may be laid on the employment-oriented education for the majority of the students, there should be ample room to explore subjects relating to literature and fine arts, history and philosophy for their own sake, so that people who would so desire may pursue this line of education for the pleasure they afford. (555 words)

(b) LITERARY & EDUCATIONAL TOPICS

35. Literary Creation and Criticism (WBCS '51)

Literary creation or the Literature is the best expression of the best thought put in writing and it includes poetry, drama, novel, short stories, biographies and other literary essays. The various forms of literature are the outcome of race peculiarities, diverse individual sentiments and temperaments and the predominance of different political thoughts and beliefs. Poetry generally precedes prose and it embodies more poignantly the sentiments of unsophisticated man.

Prose is based more on reasoning than on sentiment and there is a clear tendency of making it simpler and more accurate in its representation, freed from superfluous ornaments. Every successful writer, poet or dramatist enables us to see life through spectacles of a new colour and a new angle of vision. A touch of unusual colour in the hands of such a writer changes a commonplace matter into a masterpiece. As rhyme and rhythm are the life of a poem, so the style in writing and the depth of thought make any composition in prose or drama popular and interesting. The drama is one of the oldest as well as the most popular of literary forms. There are various classifications of dramas and novels. Thus dramas may be tragedy, comedy or farce, while novels may be romantic, historical, social, detective and the like. Most of the writings of modern times are influenced by realism so much so that a question has been raised as to whether there should be any limit of realism in literature from the point of view of moral and aesthetic standards.

Criticism means judgment of works of art and literature and is different from the simple contemplation of literature itself.

The literary criticism is based on various elements : thorough grasp of the form and content of the particular work of literature, its intellectual and imaginative or instructional value, its *relation with the totality of the author's output and association with other contemporary works*. A thorough criticism of any work of art requires the study of the author's other writings, his biography and knowledge of all that appertains to forms and style, philosophy and ideas aesthetic or mundane, problems of the day, appreciations of contemporary writings, historical events, social surroundings and the like. In practice, however, the literary criticisms deal with only one or other of these elements. Determination of the psycho-analytical factors has no less a value in the field of literary criticism. The dramatic criticism is based on the theory of drama in general and studies of the dramatic achievements of individual periods and authors and current criticisms of plays as staged in the theatre. There should be a thorough analysis of the conflicting events, motives and characters and an appreciation of the climax. The growth of realistic drama in modern times has opened up wider scope for critical studies. A really good and constructive criticism has also a great literary value, because in surveying and assessing the value of the past and present literature, it may indicate the course and the goal or ideal of the future literature. The criticism may also make or mar the career of any promising literary genius. (515 words)

36. Limits of Realism in literature. (WBCS '52, IAS '60)

Realism in art is not a method but a tendency, i. e. something of very variable and relative nature, which can manifest itself in diverse forms. It tends to be predominant only when certain circumstances, social and economic, become obtrusive in literature, while it slings back into its outer framework, when man's eternal sensibility and feeling revolt against the ugly and prosaic day-to-day world. Obviously, literature cannot in any way be wholly immune from the mundane aspects of life and the proportion of these aspects of life transmuted into literature, determines the degree of realism.

*Generally speaking, the classical art tends to be more

realistic than romantic art, because in the former intellectualism and rational approach to the problems of life play a predominant part, while in the latter, exuberance of imagination and feeling of sense and sensibility, burning in white heat in the act of creation, tend to dissolve the thin veil of realism. Aeschylus's 'Prometheus Bound' is more realistic, in a sense than Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound'.

Not only the nature of art, but also the forms of literature often determine the degree of realism to be transmuted into it. As a rule, poetry and poetic drama are more adverse to realism than novels and dramas, because poetry takes its origin from "emotions recollected in tranquillity" (of course, if we accept the theory of the august advocate of the romantic school of poetry); while novels and dramas, endowed by their very *genre* with vast scope for treatment of varied aspects of life, can be realistic.

The question of the limits of realism has arisen, of late, simply because literature as a whole has recently tended to be realistic so much that the portrayal of ugly, repulsive and prosaic sides of life has become almost a fashion. The orthodox adherents of literature think it improper to treat of the morbid sexual passion, as D. H. Lawrence has done in "Lady Chatterley's Lover", of the forces of Oedipus complex and mother-fixation, as Auden and Isherwood have done in their poetic drama, "The Ascent of F6". A poem of Auden is a veritable ground for Freud, Huxley, Marx, sitting together and exchanging quips and jokes in technical terms of politics, economics, psychology and what not.

Such perversity of realism has engaged the serious attention of modern thinkers who seek some way-out of this 'decadence and impasse in literature.

Obvious limits of realism are that anything obscene and ugly which may provoke the repulsive attitude of readers, should not be allowed to intrude into literature; that literature should not be made the parade-ground of all the new discoveries of modern science and psychology; that it should not be turned into a cockpit of diverse doctrine of modern reformists,

In literature, Realism must occupy its place in the outer fringe of its framework, and should not be too overt and obtrusive. (477 words)

37. The Novel as the Modern Epic (WBCS '66)

The novel is often described as a Modern Epic, because in a Novel some of the characteristics of an Epic do appear in a miniature or modified form. Epic is a long poem describing the deeds and adventures of a great hero, as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and a story of great deeds and heroism of several kings and warriors as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The Epic of old days had some special characteristics such as a considerable size, opening with benedictions and salutations and the theme woven round the historical incidents or some facts. It was embellished by the descriptions of cities, oceans, mountains, seasons and other natural phenomena, festivities of drinking and love and rise of Princes, States and the triumph of the just and contained all the feelings of human mind like joy, humour, pathos etc. well knit in that book.

Fictions including novels denote imaginative literary works in prose with a shade of reality. In the popular sense, it means a story about the experiences of men and women; the characters in the story act and react upon another; incident after incident follows in rapid succession, and the story is brightened up sometimes by comic incidents followed by true pathos and sometimes by problems concerning human life or suspense about the end. Thus there is a great similarity in the literary works of a Novel and the Epic in its present form. A good novel must have a thick plot. It is the result of many tributaries of actions flowing at the end into a single stream. The style of the writer counts much and thus makes the difference in the writings of different authors. Novelists like George Eliot believe that it should draw pictures from real life while Galsworthy and others think that novels should correctly reproduce facts as they happen in imagination. The size of certain novels now-a-days is no less and can be well compared with an Epic. Like the Epic, the characters of certain novels are so vividly described that the reader may consider to have

seen or identified him in the crowd. In Homer's Iliad we are not told how Helen looks but we are allowed to overhear a conversation between some of the old wisemen of Troy about her beauty. This technique of indirect characterisation is often followed in some popular novels. The flash-back technique of the Epic is also followed in some novels. There are different types of novels, such as romantic novel, humorous novel, picaresque novel (where the hero is a rogue or vagabond), adventure story and the historical novel. Each one of them can be compared with a part of the old Epic, that is this fragmentation of the Epic plot is in a sense the modernisation of Epic.

Good novels are true to life, they lend to the mind a natural colour and a faithful picture of the human society. They exalt our mind and provide a pleasant relaxation. They enlarge our vision, increase the store of our knowledge and thus in all sense it can be well said that a good novel is an Epic of modern age.
(523 words)

38. Poetry in the modern world (WBCS '67)

It is a common trite that "Poetry declines as civilization advances." The truth seems to be that the poetry changes its form and shape in different ages but every age has its poets to understand the truth and beauty all around and to explain the far-off whispers of eternity.

Poetry changes in structure, in style, in themes from generation to generation and from age to age. And what contribute to such changes are changes in political outlook, a growing scientific attitude towards religion, a closer understanding of the realities of life, broad social readjustments and developments of new ethical and aesthetic values.

The modern world, for instance, does not have its Homer and Virgil. It shows that as civilization has advanced at least epic poetry has declined. What strikes us most about modern poetry is, perhaps, its hard unresolved complexity. Sometimes the intricate patterns of its imagery suggest the cobwebs of modern life; sometimes its terseness reflects our disillusionment,

our growing awareness of the essential barrenness of modern life.

Modern poets have found a fresh and vigorous material in a world of honest and often hard reality. They respond to the spirit of their time. Their vision has been widened to include things unknown to the poets of yesterday. They have learnt to distinguish real beauty from mere prettiness, to wring loveliness out of squalor, to find wonder in neglected places, to search for hidden truths even in the dark caves of unconsciousness. In other words, the bounds of poetry have extended in the modern world.

It is really interesting that in an age of science and technology poetry has not only continued to live, but it has had its bounds extended. Poetry has a very definite place in the modern world, because it has been able to adapt itself to its needs, and it has become a perfect vehicle of its thoughts.

Often modern poetry is called obscure. This obscurity should not be taken as a fault. A modern poet's obscurity is often an intellectual one. He is obscure not because he is a bad artist, but because he likes to deal with oblique subjects. A close reading of modern poetry also shows that it can assume at places a defiant clarity. Its aim is to make clear, to elucidate thought and feeling. The modern poetry seeks to discover the truth about an experience, an event, an emotion and a person that the modern world cannot do away with.

Poets are, as Eliot has always stressed, the guardians and protectors of the language. They have a responsibility to the past as well as to the present. At present times poets are aware of this responsibility. And they make their poems out of that awareness.

"The fifties have marked the rediscovery of elegance in poetry", writes Elizabeth Jennings. Much of this elegance is not merely stylistic but it derives from a feeling for values in a world. However, Aldous Huxley is of the opinion that a certain amount of the life of the twentieth century is to be found in our poetry, but precious little of its mind. This point is also controversial and Elizabeth Jennings upholds "What poets are making now is the recognition of man's dignity...it is

man, after all, who wants to arrive on those stars, poetry will have something to say about that too". (561 words)

39. **The education you would like to have if you
could choose** (Misc. '67)

In these days it is difficult to prosecute higher studies according to one's choice or desire because firstly it is generally impossible to get admission in the subject or in the college or University of choice and secondly under various pressures and influences the majority of students are compelled to take up either Science course or Technical or Commercial courses, so that as soon as the study is completed the students can earn their living.

But the English language had always been my first love. Its spell was cast on me even when in my childhood days I read some beautiful short poems of anonymous writers. Little did I know then of the spirit of the English language, but the rhyme and rhythm of those short poems charmed me so much that I began to love the language from the core of my heart. Much later in life I came to learn that the beauty of the English language derives as much from an abundance of hard consonantal sounds as from its syntactic flexibility and measured flow of words and phrases in verse or prose. The fascination of the English language and literature is so much for me that if I could choose I would have taken up English for my higher studies in the University. Nothing has ever delighted me more than the study of the gradual development of the English language. There is no denying that the English language has an inspiring and universal appeal. It contains some of the richest treasures of cultural and scientific values. It has power to link up the entire humanity. So if free choice be given for selection of a subject for higher education, I feel that the choice should be for the English language. It is a fact that the future of Mankind would require this language and it would become over-popular among the rising posterity.

If I can proceed with the subject here, I may have a bitter sense of frustration with the realization that all the facilities that I need for a close study of the English language my country

cannot give me Most books are yet to come to the Indian market. Even photostats of very old English writings are not available in the Indian Universities, and the number of teachers of high calibre and repute is scarce. Nothing do I want more than a few years' study in linguistics under brilliant guidance at the University of Oxford. There I would learn to read the original manuscripts of the first English poem ; there I would have an opportunity to see the gradual change in English calligraphy and how foreign words and phrases made their way into the English language

The study of the English language is never complete unless one has a close acquaintance with Latin, French and Greek. In India, however, one can have very inadequate facilities for a comparative study of these languages. My knowledge of the foreign influences on the English literature is derived here from books ; it is not a first-hand knowledge. If I had an opportunity I would have gone to the University of Oxford to have a first-hand knowledge of the gradual development of the English language and literature to its modern form. Then only my education would have been complete and my desire fulfilled.

(550 words)

40. Choice of six books as company in confinement

(WBCS '64)

If I had to spend some time alone in a solitary place with only books as my companions, I cannot think of any better set of books than the six following—Shakespear's *Macbeth* and *Othello*, Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, Rabindranath's *Galpa Guchcha* and Sarat Chandra's *Sreekantha*. The two plays of Shakespeare have always gripped me ever since I was a student and had to read them in my Degree Course. They appealed to me for the same reason, namely, the protagonists in the two plays, for all their power and prestige, figure as helpless victims in the meshes of a fate that embroils them all the more as they try desperately to free themselves from its clutches. These two plays of Shakespeare more than any others impress the mind with a sense of the futility of human endeavour in a dark and

*mysterious universe. They teach that humility is the only rational attitude for a man to adopt towards the universe. Hardy's *The Return of the Native* teaches pretty much the same lesson. It also impresses the mind with a sense of human insignificance when pitted against the inscrutable forces of life, Clym Yeobright with his selfless ambition and Eustacia with her exotic beauty very nearly reached happiness when their cup of bliss was dashed to pieces by the blows of an unkind fate. Egdon Heath in Southern England, which supplies background to the story with its primeval association, seems to be an embodiment of that pitiless destiny which looks on as passive art unmoved to the crushing of individual human lives under the wheels of destiny. *David Copperfield* interests me for an altogether different reason. It is a miniature world where one comes across a bewilderingly varied panorama of human life. To get to know all these different people, to be acquainted with their ideas and achievements are an education by itself. This is in addition to the interest that the reader finds in the gradual unfolding of David's life from his boyhood to manhood. Rabindranath's *Galpa Guchcha* similarly introduces the reader to an amazingly varied drama of life. The boy is pining for holidays in the alien atmosphere of city life so that he can go back to the haunts of his boyhood years and ultimately obtaining release through death (*Chhuti*), the dilapidated palace that stirs the stranger's fancy and invites him into a vanished past with all its pomps and ceremonies (*Hungry Stones*), each of these stories in the collection leaves an unforgettable impression on the mind. And lastly, Saratchandra's *Sreekanta* has an irresistible charm for the average Bengalee. Its characters particularly female creations like Annada Didi, Abhaya, Rajluxmi, Kamal-lata are a household word in every Bengalee home and the liveliness of its descriptive sketches throughout the book constitutes an added attraction of the book for me. Saratchandra and Rabindranath, without doubt, laid the foundations of Bengalee literature which is now acclaimed as one of the great literatures of the world.*

(498 words)

41. The Three-language formula (*WBCS*'66, '67, '68)

Following the anti-Hindi agitation in South India, the Congress Working Committee decided on 2.6.65 that all States should introduce three-language formula right up to the University level, that is every student should learn regional language, English and Hindi and the Hindi-speaking students should learn any other regional language. According to the Education Commission's Report of 28.6.66 the three-language formula was modified to include—(a) the mother tongue or the regional language, (b) the official language of the Union or the associate official language (i.e. Hindi or English), and (c) any modern Indian or European language other than that used as the medium of instruction. After deliberations of the State Education Ministers and the M.P's Committee on Education in May 1967, the Education Ministry suggested certain adjustments in three-language formula to make only two languages compulsory at a time. Thus the first language in the primary, middle and high schools should be the mother-tongue or the regional language. There should be no second language in the primary stage. For the students of Class V to VII the second language will be English or any other Modern Indian language or Sanskrit for Hindi-speaking areas and Hindi or English in non-Hindi areas. No third language at this stage. For students of Class VIII to X the second language in Hindi-speaking areas is one which they did not study earlier, and in non-Hindi areas Hindi or English (which was not studied earlier). The language studied in Class V to VI may be retained as optional third language. This three-language formula was also embodied in the National Educational Policy adopted by the Government of India on July 17, 1968.

But there are various difficulties to the implementation of the three-language formula. Among these are the general opposition to a heavy language load in the school curriculum, the lack of motivation for the study of an additional modern Indian language in the Hindi areas, the resistance to the study of Hindi in some non-Hindi areas, and the heavy cost and effort involved in providing for the teaching of the second and the third

languages for five to six years. The Hindi protagonists are opposed to this because Hindi has not been made compulsory. On the other hand making the study of Hindi compulsory at the stage of secondary education is not an acceptable proposal to non-Hindi States. The Hindi States in their turn have complicated the matter by their refusal to make the study of another modern Indian language compulsory.

Hence, the success of the three-language formula will depend upon the change in the attitude of the Hindi and non-Hindi States to learning an additional modern Indian language or Hindi. Since Hindi has got to be forced upon the unwilling non-Hindi States it shows that the language problem cannot be solved by decisions of the Parliament. On the other hand, the non-Hindi speaking people consider that the motive behind the introduction of this three-language formula is to pave the way for establishing Hindi-Raj in India, because when everybody will know Hindi it will not be difficult to introduce Hindi as the media of the competitive examinations for the All-India and the Central Services and in that event those whose mother tongue is Hindi will be in an advantageous position over others learning it as a third language. So this three-language formula may ultimately lead to disruption and disunity in the country.

(554 words)

42. The importance of English as a language of international culture (WBCS '73)

Only two or three centuries ago, English was spoken by so few people that no one could dream of its ever becoming a universal language. Nowadays, English is the mother tongue of a greater number of people than any of its competitors. It is second to no other language of the world in political and social and literary importance. English is spreading so fast that it bids fair to become the '*lingua franca*' of the world. In the present century science has made communication very easy. Different nations of the world are becoming neighbours. In these circumstances English helps all nations to maintain contacts with one another.

English spreads the light of knowledge throughout the world.

The vocabulary of English symbolises international culture, for it contains words from all languages of the world. Education in the modern world is based on science. Most of the books on science are either written in English or translated into English from other languages. Scientific terms are based on Latin and Greek words. English has borrowed a large number of classical words. So scientists prefer to write their books in English for the sake of international intelligibility. English also makes the study of humanities easier. The grammar of English has no complexity. On the other hand, most of the European languages are highly complicated. So English has become the most popular medium of instruction in many countries. Basic English is studied in many European countries, and with greater enthusiasm, in the East. In the modern world English serves as the common medium for political, historical and scientific thought for the peoples of the world. The great English language is now practically the *lingua franca* of the entire civilized world in the sense that it is accepted as the most effective medium of international communication. It is the most glorious store-house of human knowledge and culture. It has also enriched its stock through transliteration of all important books on literature and science published in different languages. Thus with the knowledge in English one can understand the purport of any important book written in any foreign language. India's long association with English language has rendered a very useful service in her maintaining a close relationship and communication with the big and small States of the world through the medium of English language. It will be a great folly if India discards English on the ground of its being a foreign language and a legacy of the former Colonial Masters. It has to be borne in mind that a language is not the exclusive property of only those whose vernacular it happens to be. Just as Shakespeare and Tagore belong to the whole world, so also the language in which they wrote their deathless works. English language has attained this international character on account of its intrinsic worth, its aesthetic and cultural value and its grace, elasticity and richness.

English has the advantage of being the language of two of

the greatest powers of the world. As the peoples speaking English enjoy the blessings of political, cultural, technological and commercial progress, their language is already well suited for conveying ideas on every kind and faithfully reflecting the progress they have made in every field of human activity. English language is impregnated with ideas, not only of England but also of all progressive countries. In view of its importance for higher scientific and technical education and a vast store of literature at its credit, English language has acquired this international characteristic. One need not be a great prophet to predict that in the near future the number of English speaking people will multiply considerably. We hope that the day is not far off when English will bind mankind in a common framework of universal culture.

(624 words)

43. In our Schools and Colleges, there is too much stress laid on teaching and too little on active learning.

(WBCS '63)

The system of imparting education that prevails in our country is defective from many points of view. For sound teaching, a proper teacher-pupil ratio is one of the prime requisites. It is to be remembered that a teacher has only a limited time within which to teach his class. If therefore the class consists of a disproportionately large body of students, the teacher has no other way than to discharge his duties in a perfunctory manner. The demand for education in this country is growing apace but the resources at the disposal of the School Board or Government are not sufficient to provide adequate schooling facilities for this growing volume of demand. The result is that the schools are being literally flooded with students and each class has to accommodate a very large number of students beyond its capacity. An inevitable corollary to this over-crowding in schools, is that all accepted modes of teaching are being given up, the sole stress being laid on maintaining discipline in classes, since it is feared that if the students are let alone they will create a pandemonium in the school or college premises. The teacher

goes to his class to make a pretence of teaching, since he has to cover an unconscionably long course in the subject in a limited time and he has neither a mind nor energy to see whether all students in the class profit by his teaching or even try to follow his instructions. Thus while the number of subjects that a student has to learn is going up and the course in each subject is becoming increasingly unwieldy, the standard of teaching is rapidly deteriorating in quality and the percentage of failure is increasing from year to year. The condition of things in the colleges is still worse. In a class consisting of two hundred students most of whom lack proper equipment for higher education and attend the college because they have nothing better to do, the lecturer does not even make a pretence of making himself understood by his pupils. He comes to the class, lectures on the subject and when the period is over he steps out of the class room with a sigh of relief. The whole educational structure is fast becoming an empty show. This is not how education is given in progressive countries. There the utmost care is taken to see that the student receives what is given to him and really profits by the instruction given in the class. In a sound educational system the student should be mentally alert to imbibe the teachings or the whole purpose of education is defeated. The tutorial system as it prevails in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge helps to bring out the best in the student. A small number of students is entrusted to the care of a competent teacher whose task is to see that his pupils do solid work in accordance with his instructions. But in this country more attention is paid to the putting up of a show than to see that the student really learns something,

(515 words)

44. Feelings of an examinee waiting outside to appear for the first paper of this examination (WBCS'65)

At this moment I am in the Examination Hall writing out my answers on the script supplied to me. I do not find the questions too difficult and as I go on answering my feeling of confidence increases. I now realise how false were the fears that assailed me as I was coming to the Examination Hall this

morning. It was not that I was not sufficiently prepared to face the ordeal of the examination. I had been, in fact, preparing for a couple of months and had read up almost everything that could have any bearing on this examination. And yet as I came to the Hall this morning my nerves failed me and for some time it seemed that the earth was slipping off from under my feet. I had a feeling such as had never come to me before. As I reached the Hall I found hundreds of examinees all waiting for the Hall door to open. Most of the faces were unknown to me. Apparently they came from different parts of West Bengal. Only a few of my acquaintances were among them. But I avoided talking to them lest conversation might betray the feeling of nervousness that at the moment was overwhelming. I found the examinees standing in groups and discussing questions that might be set for this paper. Suddenly I had the feeling that they knew so much more than I did and surely they were bound to fare much better than I could possibly do. I walked away from the crowd to calm my nerves. I went to the bath room and sprinkled water in my face. This had the desired effect. Gradually my nerves calmed down and I attained composure. As I came away from the bath room I found that the Hall door had been opened and the answer scripts were being distributed. The examinees who had been waiting outside so long had all entered the Hall and taken their respective seats. I was going to follow suit, when I was accosted by one of my friends who was also appearing in the examination. He was looking very bright and confident and he talked to me airily as if examinations were a matter of daily occurrence in his life and therefore held no terrors for him. I felt lighter after having talked to him and been in his company for a minute or two. When we together entered the Hall immediately after this, I was almost my normal self with hardly any trace of the fear that had unmanned me a few minutes ago. My friend is sitting at some distance from me and is at present very busy answering the questions. I am sure he will fare very well in the examination. (460 words)

45. Should all examinations be abolished ?

(WBCE 70, '76, LAS '76)

There is almost an upsurge of feelings against all examinations in our Universities and Boards. Frequent disruption of examinations involving the tearing of question papers and examination scripts, at times even manhandling of the invigilators or destruction of furniture in the halls inescapably points out the hazards of holding any examination at all.

An ever-growing violence among youth resolutely opposed to the present system of University education could have been checked with the ushering in of some reforms, had there been no ominous tendency to disrupt the examinations by all means. Those who want to do away with the examinations, however, expect to be honoured with a degree on completion of their course of studies. They know that whatever be the market value of University degrees they could not do without them. Then why this unhealthy excitement, this dastardly attack on examinations? The reason is not far to seek. Why take the trouble of sitting for the examination when you can go without it? There is definitely a logic in this course of action. When youths study in an institution they surely look forward to their success, and the institution concerned should provide for such tuitions as would make average students qualified for a degree or diploma. Nonetheless, the importance of holding some sort of test to assess the students' intellectual equipments, his advancement of learning and his relative position amongst other examinees cannot be underestimated. Examinations are also essential for setting down the guidelines for preparation of the courses of studies.

The conventional system of examination at the University or Board level now calls for a thorough overhaul since the old apparatus of public examinations or terminal tests are almost becoming out of date in view of the difficulties of conducting large-scale tests with firmness and justice in face of the growing turbulence among youths all over the country. Students sitting for the tests in recent Board and University examinations have almost *en masse* adopted unfair means making a travesty of the very institutions. Hence, the suggestion for allowing students to consult books in the examination hall, as has been

put forward in a Senate Meeting of a University, hardly comes as a surprise.

It is not whether we should scrap all examinations but what kind of examinations we should have in place of the existing system, which is of great significance. Should it be purely an objective method of examination or a combination of the subjective and objective tests? Need there be any terminal examination any longer in place of the cumulative assessment of the student's performance in any institution? These are some of the vital issues related to the problem of examination.

The present examination system simply encourages useless cramming of voluminous texts and notes read over years for reproduction in the answer-scripts once for ever. Many, who are not so studious or who have not that capacity of cramming, come out unsuccessful after waste of money and energy over years. The paper-setters and examiners are also indifferent as to whether the questions set are within the syllabus or within the standard expected from such examinees. With the explosive growth in the number of examinees, it is well-nigh impossible to conduct such a terminal examination fairly and the long time taken in publishing the results also affects their career. So, instead of totally abolishing the examination system it is better that some alternative method is tested. The marks given in the periodical tests and seminars in different institutions may be summed up for the purpose of issuing a Course Completion Certificate from the Central Body, viz. the University or the Board. (600 words)

46. Literature and Society (WBCS, '72)

Or. Has literature a social role? (WBCS, '76)

Literature is always a mirror of life which presupposes a social background. It reflects the passions and aspirations, the wishes and visions, the ideas and attitudes, the vices and virtues of individuals and societies. It varies according to the tastes and fashions of particular ages, thus reflecting the spirit of the time. The literature also wields a great influence

on society. A good literature upholds some ideals drawn from our everyday life, while there are other types of literature which by representing and magnifying the baser elements of human nature may weaken our moral tone and thus cause a great harm to the society.

The true end of literature, however, is to lead humanity to a better goal, ennobling the feelings of man and sanctifying his tastes. There is a class of authors who hold and preach the theory that art and literature have no such aim and that the creation of a literary masterpiece is an end in itself. They seem to hold that art should rather be for the sake of art alone and that any other motive is liable to spoil the artistic pose.

Does it mean then that literature can best flourish when divorced from life lived in society, that good literature can only be made with character that we behold only in our dreams, with situations to which we are stranger? The answer lies in the understanding of the true relationship between life and literature. Literature, or any other art, should reflect life and yet should help the reader find a new meaning in life itself. Art, therefore, should deal with life and yet subject it to a sea-change into something rich and strange. This is how literature transcends the barrier of time and space, serves a great purpose and becomes meaningful.

According to some, literature should be a photograph of things as they are found in society. While others hold that the healthy growth of society demands the observance of certain fundamental moral principles, and that, therefore, anything which pollutes the mind and goes against the moral tone of society deserves severe condemnation. Production of vicious literature presenting in a colourful manner the vulgar instincts of man, cannot be justified even on the plea of realistic literature. The real aim of literature is to present beauty and not ugliness in the society.

If we turn to the best literary works, we find that, in various ways, they represent the society of man and yet offer some lessons for us. *Hamlet* is a story of murder and incest, but it is also a profound study of a noble soul which is at a loss before a 'time that is out of joint.' *Othello* is the story of

jealousy and sexual love but it is also a study of spiritual love that binds young souls.

Further, literature and pornography are not the same ; the difference lies in approach and intention of the author. Hence, Samaresh Bosu's '*Prajapati*' (Butterfly) remains a pornograph while Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* attains artistic excellence, though both have one thing in common, namely, the description of erotic pleasure in sensual love. Literature not only reflects life as lived in various societies of man but also paints a richer and fuller and nobler life. If literature is a medium of communication, it succeeds only when it communicates a pleasure to the reader, a healthy pleasure, not a morbid one. Thus success of a literature is closely related to the performance of its social role. (580 words)

47. **Literature and national life** (WBCS '74)

Literature means all writings in prose or verse of a country or a period, especially those that have permanent value because of their beauty of form and emotional effect. Drama, fiction, essays and poetry, are usually described as literature contrasted with technical and scientific works and journalism. Literature is a social product, and the works of every writer reflect the spirit of the age in which he produces them. He also shares the broad currents of thought and feeling with other members of his society, and thus in revealing himself the writer also reflects his society. The greatest works of art are true to time and place. Literature is the record and expression of the national life ; it faithfully reflects the spirit of the particular set of ideas through which life is seen and lived.

Literature is a pen-picture of our joys and sorrows, successes and failures, our hopes and fears, our passions and prejudices and virtues and vices. The success or popularity of a literature depends on the correct reproduction of the life and living of a true character in its natural setting and the rise and fall in their life with human feelings and emotions.

Literature takes its colour and tone from the life of the age in which it is produced. It takes its origin from national life. A careful study of the history of English literature shows how literature reflects changing national life. Chaucer is the greatest

poet of the Middle Ages. His masterpiece 'Prologue to the Canterbury Tales' is aptly described as a mirror of the fourteenth century England. The works of Spenser, Marlowe and Shakespeare reflect the spirit of the English people during the regime of Elizabeth. Marlowe was a child of the Renaissance. As Wilson puts it : "The Renaissance man must have courage and brains, haughtiness of heart and a reaching and imaginative mind." Shakespeare's plays are a record of the life of the English nation in the Elizabethan age. The Elizabethans loved to witness sports like boar-hunting. So Shakespeare's dramas represent scenes of bloodshed and torture. The inhumanity of a Shylock and the tortures of a Gloucester were not at all revolting to Shakespeare's contemporaries. The unbounded energy of Elizabethan life, found its best expression in Shakespeare's works. In the Restoration period the fervour, which found expression in the literature of the Elizabethan age, passed away and national life grew chilly. Thus Restoration comedy painted a true picture of the heartless and licentious upper classes of the period. Addison and Steele got the themes of their works from the life of their contemporaries. The revolutionary spirit of the French revolution found expression in the works of the romantic poets like Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley. The spiritual weakness and mental distress of the English nation during the Victorian period were expressed in the works of the major poets and prose-writers like Tennyson, Arnold and Carlyle. English literature of the present century reflects the English nation's spirit of disillusionment and doubt. In Indian literature also we find that the changes in the national life from time to time are duly reflected in the literature of that period.

As a rule, poetry and poetic drama are more adverse to realism than novels and dramas, because poetry takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquillity, while novels and dramas are more realistic in the treatment of varied aspects of life. But literature of a nation is in general an expression of its life and character. It also helps to mould national character.

(587 words)

48. Your favourite author (Misc '72)

My favourite author is Shakespeare. I was acquainted with Shakespeare's works in my college days. But Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare" gave me some idea about the charms of Shakespeare's plays when I was a school boy. I have been reading Shakespeare's plays since the beginning of my college life and my love of the great dramatist has increased with the lapse of years.

I consider Shakespeare as my favourite author because I can turn to his works on all occasions. In my sober mood I read his tragedies like "Hamlet", "Othello", "King Lear" and "Macbeth". In my light mood I turn to his comedies like "Love's Labour Lost", "As You Like It" and "Twelfth Night". When the history books appear to me to be dull, I turn to "Henry V" or "Anthony and Cleopatra" for relief.

I love Shakespeare because he has created sweet female characters like Cordelia, Desdemona, Juliet and Portia. In the works of no other writer I find such lovable female characters. They add grace to our life. Finally, Shakespeare fascinates me because he has created a host of ghosts, witches, fairies and monsters. I can never forget the ghost of Hamlet's father and the mischievous fairies in "A Mid-Summer Night's Dream". The witches in "Macbeth" always create an atmosphere of mystery for me. Cleopatra, a brilliant ambitious woman and the beauty queen of Egypt captivates my imagination even now.

I describe Shakespeare as my favourite author but I do not claim that I have a thorough grasp of his works. I remain satisfied with my meagre knowledge of my favourite author whom I love from my heart. His works give me joy and happiness at times and solace in my grief. All my feelings reverberate in his works and I find him very close to my mind when I am engrossed in his works. (305 words)

49. The Usefulness of Reading (CL '74)

As it is impossible to read more than a very small fraction of the immense number of books now in existence, the proper

choice of books is a matter of great importance. Owing to differences in the intellectual tastes and likings, the books which are of great interest to one man may be disliked by another man. In the first instance one has to select the subject on which one wants to develop one's knowledge and then to find out the noted and best writers on that subject so that each book read may be fruitful to one. A willing reader may form his taste by reading the classics—the best books of the best writers. When he is thoroughly acquainted with the classics, it will be found that he has unconsciously developed a peculiar instinct for choosing the right sort of books suited to his needs and temperament.

Books provide us with intellectual nourishment. We assimilate the contents of good books into our thought. Well-digested books make a healthy mind. Good books enrich the mind, and enlarge its circumference. Books are not dead things. They are all living things and are our best companions. Southey describes books as his "never failing friends". Indeed, books remain our constant companions in solitude and in times of mental depression.

Books are the treasured wealth of the world and by reading these books one may come into contact with the great minds that have contributed to the knowledge and wisdom of the world. Books play a very important role in our social life. The habit of reading books on various subjects makes us worthy members of the society. Books which contribute to the moral health of a society may remove many social evils. In many countries novels are used as instruments of social reform. Thus Charles Dickens drew the attention of his contemporaries to many social problems of his age in his novels like 'David Copperfield' and 'Oliver Twist'. In our country Sarat Chandra used his novels as social correctives.

The foundations of knowledge must be laid by reading. "The true university in our days is a collection of books", says Carlyle. So reading is the most important factor in education. Reading is also a healthy and innocent form of recreation. After the day's hard labour, one feels happy to relax over au

interesting book. Such reading serves the purpose of refreshing the tired mind. Few pleasures can really be greater than this. (409 words)

50. The problems facing primary education today

(Misc '75)

The primary stage is the most important stage in a child's educational career because that is the formative period in his life. The best teaching talent and a closer rapport between the teacher and the taught are necessary to build up a right foundation.

The National Educational Policy of India, as adopted in July 1968, provided free and compulsory education upto the age of 14 in fulfilment of the directive principle of the Constitution. The Primary or Elementary Schools, also called Junior Basic Schools, are meant for children of age-group 5—11, while the Middle or the Senior Basic Schools for the age-group 11—14 belong to Secondary Schools. Compulsory Primary Education Act has been passed by most of the States. Although in most of the States free primary education is being provided to both boys and girls, in some States like Assam, U. P. and West Bengal, primary education is free for girls but it is free for boys only upto Class V or VI. Primary education, especially the Basic education, has an activity-centered curriculum with the object that a person unable to continue his studies beyond the primary stage may not find himself helpless.

At present the State Government practically bears the entire responsibility of free primary education in the State. In urban areas the ratio of approved teacher per free primary school is one teacher for 40 students. But in the rural areas no school gets more than three teachers even if the roll strength of the students exceeds 200 or 250. The quality of teaching of so many students by each teacher can be well imagined.

To cope with the increasing trend of children population, it is necessary to open a still larger number of primary schools and to provide a larger number of trained teachers, besides

free supply of text-books and mid-day meals—all of which are being stemmed by the constraint of resources. If generous minds come forward and college students render voluntary services some of the problems can be solved. (326 words)

**51. The prospects of an educated young man
in India today (WBCS '72)**

An educated young man is definitely an asset to the country. His education, which must have cost the country a great deal of money should pay dividends. And the young man who has put in years of labour and devotion, expects in the normal course to be rewarded in terms of such opportunities or avenues of employment which will offer him the satisfaction of being gainfully employed. But how far do the youths of our country with technical or university education receive their due after their ceremonial passing out of the institutions ? The prospect seem to be bleak indeed.

Yet, when we think of prospects, we must look at the situations obtaining in our country in their true perspective. Employment opportunities have surely expanded considerably with the execution of several five-year Plans. But compared to the number of the unemployed in the country, job provisions are far below the expected minimum. The educated unemployed constituted the bulk of the most aggrieved section of people in our country, because they find their opportunities too limited and disappointing. One of the most significant aspects of this disquieting picture is that the educated youths seldom look forward to any job that involves manual labour, their choice, decidedly, being in favour of white-collar jobs. With the rapid expansion of education in the country, the ratio of white-collar jobs and the educated youths must be disproportionate indeed. There is surely something wrong with our education which prepared the youths not for taking up all sorts of challenges in life, for building up the country, but for a leisurely and comfortable job that hardly calls for any physical or mental exertion. Hence, the cry of the disgruntled youths after their graduation is for a secure berth¹ in life rather

than for opportunities to put their acquired skill to test. In any developing-country the educated youths are often exposed to diverse challenges for the reconstruction of the country. Not only are they harnessed to the ambitious projects undertaken by the State, but also they are employed by the enterprising private firms for exploiting their youthful energy to gainful ends. Since the skilled and educated youths can be trusted for sophisticated and challenging work, it is very much expected that they would find their rightful place in trade and industry. But unfortunately for us, educated youths seldom find an opening for them where they may find scope for showing their best in leadership and initiative. One of the valid reasons for not throwing open these jobs to them is that their training is often found to be inadequate enough for such undertakings. Of course, efficiency is mostly sacrificed for providing jobs to the kith and kin of the influential people in India. This undoubtedly narrows down the prospects of the educated youths in our country.

For the educated youths, however, new opportunities are opening up with the nationalization of banks in the country. Enterprising youngmen can now combine together to set up small-scale industries with liberal loans from these banks. In the field of agriculture the skilled and educated youths with scientific orientation can now usher in a revolutionary change through co-operative farming. All this, nevertheless calls for a change of outlook among the literate and skilled people; they must give up the conventional job-hunting which very much limits their prospects and slackens down the progress of the country. They should also engage themselves in small tradings in individual capacity or in groups under partnership or co-operative terms. This all-out effort only can solve this ever-increasing unemployment problem. (593 words)

52. The present system of education and its defects

(CL '75)

"Education can wait, swaraj cannot." This was said by a distinguished leader during our struggle for freedom. Education has been waiting since then. There is no denying

that education which should have received the highest priority after 1947 has received no attention at all. Our educational standards have been steadily going down and down in the last thirty years after Independence. At present the decline of our *educational standards has caught the attention of other nations*. Thus in recent times doctors who had received their degrees and diplomas from different Indian Universities were put to a severe test in England.

India has not made much progress in the field of primary education. Even after Independence the majority of the children are deprived of the benefits of primary education. The standard of our primary education is very low. The reasons are not far to seek. The syllabus of our primary students is unusually heavy. A tiny boy of Class II or III has to read a large number of books. Most of these books are hurriedly written and are not calculated to create interest in young minds. And the persons entrusted with the task of teaching these books are not well-equipped.

Secondary education is the pivot of a country's educational system. People who frame educational policy of our country live in their own world of pet theories and ideas. Some of these theories have done great harm to our secondary education. The 11-year Higher Secondary course was introduced in the sixties. But now it has been decided that this course would be given a go-by. Again the 10-year School Final course is going to be introduced. Thus our secondary education is passing through a critical period.

Education at college and University levels in our country does not present a bright picture. Now-a-days our Universities confer doctorates in all branches of study with liberal hands. But we have very few eminent professors. For various reasons serious students are few in our colleges and Universities. So higher education in India exists in name only.

Our national leaders should attach due importance to education which has been neglected for a long time. Our government must assume the fullest responsibility for proper education of the children. Salaries of teachers and professors

should be increased in order to attract talented persons to the teaching profession. If our leaders shirk this duty today, they will have to pay a very heavy price for it tomorrow.

(407 words)

**58. The possibilities of the 10+2+3
educational system**

(Misc '76)

The 10-year School Course, termed Madhyamik or Secondary Course, was reintroduced in West Bengal from Jan'y. 1, 1974 putting an end to the 11-year Higher Secondary System which had been introduced in West Bengal in 1957. After completion of the Secondary School course a student will have to take up a two-year (Class XI-XII) of the Higher Secondary Course before he can be admitted in a Three-Year Degree Course in Arts, Science or Commerce. The curriculum for the West Bengal Secondary Education Board's Final Examination at the end of Class X according to the reorganised structural pattern of Secondary Education will be as follows :

First Language (i.e. mother tongue) (2 papers)—200 ; Second Language (English or Bengali &c)—100 ; Third Language (Sanskrit/Pali/Persian/Arabic &c)—100 ; Mathematics—100 ; Physical Science—100 ; Life Sciences—100 ; India and Her people (History & Constitution)—100 ; Geography—100 ; Work Education (50) ; Physical Education (30) ; Social Service (10) and School Performance (10)—100. Total—Compulsory 10 papers bearing 1000 marks (including 100 marks for oral tests). One additional paper of 100 marks may be taken on any academic or vocational subject.

The Higher Secondary stage corresponding to the old Intermediate Course has two streams, namely (a) General stream and (b) Vocational stream. The General stream will be—Two Languages—400 marks, Three Elective subjects—600 marks. One of the Specified Activities (Work Education : Physical Education—N C C—Social & Community Service). One Optional subject—200. Students entering the new "Plus two" stage of schooling from the next academic session will be admitted on grade-based criteria. They will be examined at the end of four six-monthly semesters. Subject-wise grades on

a seven-point scale ranging from 'excellent' to 'poor' will determine their standard.

The stress on including objective questions in the written examination and the introduction of oral examination in the Secondary Course had brought about a qualitative change in the method of learning. An examination on the basis of "group disciplines" such as literature and science in place of individual subjects had helped to remove the examination fear psychosis.

In West Bengal, the new pattern seems to have been introduced in haste and without adequate preparation. Particularly the Higher Secondary (Plus two) stage has begun without enough teachers, equipments, text-books and even pupils. Secondary students are over-burdened with diverse subjects and text-books and they have little time to develop their aptitude for self-expressions. (358 words)

(c) TOPICS ON HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

54. History repeats itself (Misc. '68)

Time moves in a cycle. Whatever startling events take place on this earth are just in the process of repetition. Though the superficial details might vary, the nature of events, nevertheless, remains quite similar. As a matter of fact, the cycle of birth, growth and decay, which regulates our life, also regulates the human history—the chronicle of life itself.

Great empires which flourished in the remote past decayed and passed into oblivion. New empires arose, had their day and then ceased to exist. From the earliest civilization of Assyria and Babylon to those of Egypt, Greece and Rome in the West, and from the early Indo-Aryan civilization to the Hindu period of Indian History we have almost the same story of successive rise and fall and occasional dis-integration of the country into a number of principalities thus falling an easy prey to foreign invaders. Similarly through the inscrutable process of alternate rise and fall, the Sultanic Empires gave way on the establishment of the great Mughal Empire, but luxury, bigotry, tyranny and incompetence undermined the

foundation of the Mughal rule and gradually the country came under the sway of the British Empire. That empire again has crumbled into dust and on its ashes has emerged the free and sovereign Republic of India.

It is true that unexpected things happen sometimes in history, in the religious and cultural life and in other spheres of activities and it may mould the stereotyped life of the people in a different and unprecedented way but still the number of such happenings is so rare that it cannot be accepted as a universal truth so as to lessen the value of the study of history, that is the records of the past. Even in matters of social habits, dress and etiquette and in religious beliefs, men hardly go forward and we often find that history repeats itself. (313 words)

55. "History repeats itself" and "The unexpected always happens"—which of the above sayings is supported by your study of Indian History ?

(WBCS '56, IAS '49, 66)

Since the dawn of creation man has been the rightful ruler of the world. God, it is said, made man in his own image. This implies that man has been endowed with heavenly virtues which distinguish him from all other created beings. His actions are prompted not by mere animal instinct, but by intuitive judgment and growing needs of life under changing environments. Besides being rational, man is also a social being. Thus from the time of the first man Adam, whom God gave Eve as his companion, the world of man has grown from clans to communities, from communities to societies and then to states and governments. The human society has been passing from age to age through changes in its process of evolution, brought about by economical, ethical and ideological conflicts and contradictions. As in communities, so among nations these changes have occurred from age to age in a sort of cyclic order.

History is replete with instances of epoch-making changes among nations of the World. With the progress of civilization

when a community or a nation reaches a certain stage of advancement, a sense of complacency and contentment retards incentive to further progress, leading to all-round decadence and stagnation. The world is advancing, but the progress of civilization, the gradual development of human society, are not a smooth and continuous process.

Great empires which flourished in the remote past decayed and passed into oblivion. New empires arose, had their day and then ceased to be. Historians, archaeologists and explorers tell us about wonderful civilizations, nations and systems of the misty past. We marvel at them and at the similarity of fate that awaited them all. From the earliest civilizations of Assyria and Babylon to those of Egypt, Greece and Rome in the West, and from the early Indo-Aryan civilization to the Hindu Period of Indian History we have almost the same story of successive rise and fall. With the fall of every empire in India, the country split up into numerous principalities and became an easy prey to foreign invaders. The mighty Asokan Empire and the Gupta Empire after some period of brilliance met with the same result of decay. Many small kingdoms appeared and vanished, and luxury, oppression, bigotry and petty jealousies tore the land asunder.

We notice similar changes in the sphere of religious faith also. In the wake of successive political changes, moral and cultural decadence set in, affecting the religious life of the people. When Vedic Hinduism tended to deteriorate into lifeless rites and rituals, the advent of Lord Buddha heralded the dawn of a new era of faith. But the sway of Buddhism was not to last long, owing to the revival of Hinduism made possible through great teachers and reformers like Sankaracharya.

India was once more hopelessly disintegrated into many factions and warring units and lay at the mercy of Muslim invaders from Arabia, Persia and Afghanistan. The whole country was overrun by powerful and ambitious Pathans. Through the inscrutable process of alternate rise and fall, the Sultanate empires gave way to the establishment of the great Mughal Empire. Luxury, bigotry, tyranny and incompetence

undermined the foundation of Mughal rule and the country was again split up into numerous units. History thus repeated itself and we had the formidable British Empire in India. That empire again has crumbled into dust and on its ashes has emerged the free and sovereign Republic of India.

It will thus be seen that an immutable law of change governs the human society from the dawn of civilization. Progress implies change. Man journeys onward through a succession of changes which occur in a sort of cyclic order.

It is true that unexpected things happen sometimes in history, in the religious and cultural life and in other spheres of activities and it may mould the stereotyped life of the people in a different and unprecedented way but still the number of such happening, is so rare that it cannot be accepted as a universal truth so as to lessen the value of the study of history. That is the records of the past. (686 words)

56. "The Dust Heap that is History" (WBCS '58)

History, as we understand the term today, has evolved into its present form through the course of civilization from age to age. Stories, legends, anecdotes and hearsays have furnished materials with which history has been built up. From the 'dust heaps' of the past these materials have been brought to light through intensive and persistent researches.

Heroic exploits and semi-historical anecdotes in the ancient epics furnish valuable materials for historical works. Old ruins, engravings, hieroglyphics, fossilized objects and the digging up of the sites of ancient cities and the study of ancient coins, inscriptions and old manuscripts have helped in restoring the history of the past. A great mass of historical data has thus been drawn from miscellaneous sources. History is not a mere record of kings and ministers, of their victories and defeats, but it includes the social life of people in different walks of life, their hopes and aspirations, their mode of life and economic, religious, literary and other conditions of the time.

A great deal of the past of mankind has crumbled into dust under a pall of haze. The dead buried in the 'dead past' are the foundations on which 'the living present' is based. Time

flows on and with it the world emerges from the ashes of perpetual change. But the story of man is a continuous fascinating story starting from the dawn of creation to the present day. Instincts, passions, desires and ideals shape themselves into different forms through evolutionary changes, but even in the primitive times they were essentially what they are now. The process of evolution from stage to stage, which marks the advance of what we call civilization, is therefore an illuminating study.

History in its modern form is more a science than an art. Like a scientist in his study, observing and testing things to get at truths, the historian collects materials from the 'dust heap' of the hazy past and sifts them to arrange facts in chronological order. Archaeology, anthropology, epigraphy, palaeography, numismatics and other minor branches of science serve as aids to intensive historical research. In the ruins of ancient places, in pictures and engravings on crumbled structures, in implements and utensils used in the remote past, in the earliest chronicles mixed up with poetry and fable, lies hidden the story of man from the earliest times.

In the preliminary stages of evolution man was more or less a dreamer, his activities were inspired more by instinct than by reason. So, the evidences of early human behaviour are often exaggerated or hazy. Thus in the semi-historical epics and the war-tales of the ancients, we have materials in which poetry and history are mixed up. The historian has to sift and arrange these materials with scientific exactitude and precision. A true historian must be free from partisanship and national or parochial prejudices. In the 'dust heap' of the past he must look for clear and unassailable evidences of human life and nature, which are essentially the same in all stages, growing and expanding with growth of knowledge and advancement of civilization.

Adulation of the past and bias for all that belongs to one's own country and people have vitiated history in many cases. History has been rightly defined as the 'dust heap' from which one can build up any lessons one pleases. Historians and politicians have always interpreted history in their own way to prove

their pet theories. In our country much of our history was built up on distorted and dubious facts obtained from accounts given by interested colonialists to defend their excesses. Recent researches of our historians have revealed how grossly distorted some of these accounts are. The myth of the so-called 'Black Hole Tragedy' has thus been completely exploded.

For a new-born and growing nation like us the study of unadulterated history is of inestimable value. It gives unbiassed impressions about our hoary and hazy past in so far as it influences and shapes our glorious present. The rewriting of a true and objective history of the Indian people and a careful and assiduous study of their freedom movement are essential for raising the glory and dignity of the Indian Republic.

(695 words)

57. History is past politics and politics present history

(WBCS '62)

The statement equates history with politics. It is true that the history of a nation has a great deal to do with its politics and history books are generally filled with the doings and sayings of kings and statesmen. When we talk of the history of India the names of some of her great kings such as Asoke and Akbar and Sivaji flash across our mind. Similarly when we think of the history of America, we are reminded of the various stages of her political advancement, her struggle for freedom from the British yoke, the civil war and of such statesmen as Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Turning to present times we find the same story repeated. Any future historian of our age will, beyond doubt, pay a great deal of attention to the political movements. The history of the two World Wars, the rise of fascism and its decline, the steady growth of communism and other forms of internationalism, the awakening of Asia and Africa, these will surely come to occupy a considerable part in the history books written about our times,

While this is evidently true, it is no less true that the scope of history is much wider than that of politics. Politics is, indeed, only one of the many interests in the life of man,

It is bound to be of very great interest because its impact on his life is direct and immediate. How he is governed, what is the type of administration under which he lives, is of great *significance in the life of the individual. When we try to reconstruct the life of the past, it is not the kings alone who monopolise our attention ; we like to form a true picture of the other facets of life, the intellectual and emotional life of the people, the pursuit of religion, the quest for truth and knowledge. For instance, in the case of India, the growth and progress of its different religions, the flow of its intellectual life at such centres as "Nalanda" and so on interest us no less than the glitter and sparkle of the court life at Delhi and Agra. In the same way it is easy to understand that the history of our times does not consist of politics alone. Politics is a noisy business and has great attractions for the masses who prize excitement more than anything else. But behind the facade of political developments of to-day, there are quieter and surely more significant modes of living, that of the scientist who tries to penetrate into the secrets of Nature at the risk of his life and of the social worker who is pledged to improve the condition of living of his fellowmen at great personal sacrifice. The economic development of villages in our time is a fascinating story and is sure to engage the attention of the future historians in the same measure as political changes. In any well-balanced account of these days, the developments in science and in the economic life of the people are sure to occupy a place no less important than that of politics. It is, therefore, not true to say that history is made up of politics alone.*

(534 words)

58. **In which period of history and in which country would you like to have lived ?** (WBCS '68)

We often hear the elderly people speak of the good old days that are no more. How they warm up when they make any reference to their association of the past and wistfully look back to the days of yore ! This is all quite natural. Since distance always lends a charm, who among us would deny the glory that hangs round the relics of the past ?

If an Englishman were given the choice to select his own time and country in which he would be most happy to live, he might possibly seek to revive the old glory of *Elizabethan England in which peerless Shakespeare wrote his plays. But how far the blood and thunder, the witch-hunting and social etiquette of that age would suit a modern Englishman is another matter.* It is good to project one's imagination into the past in quest of the land of one's heart's desire to settle down to a system of life that has outlived itself.

If I am to find out a suitable period in the past history of India where I would have wanted to live, I shall have to go back to the days of Samudragupta or Chandragupta in the 4th c. A. D. or of Harshavardhana in the 7th C. A. D. which were the glorious days of Northern India. From the advent of the Muslims till the coming of the British in India it was a period of struggle, tyranny, distrust, cunningness, disloyalty and upheavals and not worthy of living as a commener. In the next period also, the people felt bitterly the sufferings of foreign domination and exploitation so much that many had preferred death to such a life of bondage and humiliation.

Change is the order of the universe and the joy of living lies not in peaceful resistance to change but in manly acceptance of the rough and tumble of life that sharpens the zest for life. I would, rather, prefer to live in this space age more intensely since the starry-eyed heaven is slowly revealing her charms to men, and there are endless thrills awaiting the explorer some day. I would not long for any prosperous land that is not India, since her boundless resources are all there inviting us to build up a prosperous and happy country. Whilst the advanced countries of the West get busy in their race to the moon, we in India need not sit idle. Let us explore the field of science and yet cultivate our great spiritual heritage to bring men back to their own selves—to divinity that shapes our end. Hence I like to live among my people, in our great land and to meet a glorious death in the struggle against poverty and ignorance of my country-men.

Our ancient sages once explored the mystery of man's inner self—the spirit, and how fruitfully could we now bring to bear

that wisdom upon the newly-earned knowledge of the mysterious sphere for man's upward journey to the boundless and the limitless. In no period of history would I have lived so intense and thrilling a life as I do now in our resurgent India.

(523 words)

59. "When nations grow old, the arts grow cold" (Blake)
(WBCS '55)

This is a line quoted from a well-known epigram written by William Blake on the occasion of the foundation of the Royal Academy. The whole epigram consists of four lines which run thus :

'When nations grow old, the arts grow cold,
And commerce settles on every tree ;
And the poor and the old can live upon gold,
For all are born poor, aged sixty-three."

The poet was shocked to find that the rich men of England of that time formed themselves into a society to sell and not to buy pictures and thus the rich who were all the time great patrons of arts and artists grew cold to the Arts.

It has been said that "life strives to imitate art and art sets the standards of life". Art cannot be dissociated from life, for all works of art spring from the inmost passions of the soul pertaining to man's day-to-day life and surroundings. Man is a social being and creature of environment. Things around him influence his joys and sorrows and that 'fine frenzy' find expression in poetry and fiction, in music and dancing, on canvas and marble and in brick and mortar. Art is as old as humanity and all works of art are the manifestations of the hues of the human mind. Art is dynamic and it has its vitality from variety which is the spice of life. Dull monotony retards its growth and many-sided manifestations. When an old order has obtained too long, outmoded customs retard the progress, and man's creative faculties lie dormant in the trammels of convention.

History tells us that the arts that evolved in the remote past in ancient civilizations decayed with the passing of years, as nations failed to keep pace with the march of time. The old

orders of society degenerated into lifeless forms and art ceased to develop in the absence of fresh impetus from evolution of systems and ideas. A work of art is a creation. Like a bud it blossoms in a congenial atmosphere. Sameness of environment is not congenial to its evolution. When a nation grows old, it tends to live in the dead past, far removed from the living present, in a complacent frame of mind. It thus gradually loses that vitality which is found in the changing trends of life. Artists fail to find new joys and beauties in life when society turns into a pool of stagnant waters. Thus gradual decadence of art occurred in Greece, Rome, Egypt and India. Steady growth of national consciousness in post-war India has brought about her cultural renaissance and revival of art in various spheres. Similar revival is noticeable in certain other comparatively old countries where stir of new life has set in after prolonged inanity and stagnation. As poetry declines with the advance of civilization, so the art productions as also the artistic temper and the appreciation of art also decline with the growth in the age of nations. (493 words)

60. *Glorification of the Past.* (WBCS '60)

Admiration for the past is a well-known trait of human nature. It manifests itself in various ways both in our thoughts and in our actions which are often hedged by a sort of nostalgic feeling for what we had and what we had been. In glorifying the past we sometimes forget that the present and the future are more or less its continuation. As the present recedes into the past, distance seems to lend it an aura of sanctity and charm.

Glorification of the past verging on veneration is common feature among people of countries having a hoary past with centuries of history. Ancestor-worship, as it obtains in Japan, and in other forms in various other ancient countries, has originated from this feeling of veneration. Judged from different angles, this feeling of veneration for the past has its uses and abuses. It is a folly to strive to go adrift from the moorings of the past altogether, for it is not only an impossibility, but such attempts are fraught with various evils as well. From the dead

past we may glean knowledge of experiences gathered by our forbears, in the light of which we may seek to guide and improve ourselves. On the other hand, with the passing of time, the shoals and pitfalls are obliterated from view and the past gradually assumes a fascination all its own.

Ultra-modernism is prone to look with an amount of disdain on the past and seeks to break away from it in order to build the present anew. This tendency is born of conceit and a mistaken view of life and time. Human character receives its strength and dignity not alone from what is done here and now but from things done on various occasions in the times gone by. People of ancient countries like India have a tendency to look back to the hoary past for all that is great and good. This tendency, as History tells us, has been the primary cause of decadence and fall of many such countries. Tradition has a great sway on the minds of an ancient people and all incentive to progress lies fettered in the trammels of tradition. The whole world is fast moving on from change to change and unless a people makes a continuous endeavour to keep abreast of the times, it is bound to be swept away or cast far behind.

Inordinate adulation of the past is thus a handicap to progress. It often robs us of incentive to action and lulls us into inanity by generating a sense of supreme self-content and self-reverence. We must remember that while cherishing the priceless heritage of the past, we must learn to utilise it in the present. The border line between the past and the present has never been defined. This is apparent in all spheres of human activities. We often speak of *ages* of literature and *periods* of history, in which some outstanding figures or events over-shadow the rest. But these phases of literature or history are not isolated entities. The present emerges out of the ashes of the past to merge in course of time into the future.

It is no doubt good to look to the past for inspiration and guidance, but this should not be allowed to circumscribe and hamper our present activities. Let us glorify the great past by all means, but this glorification should not be carried into excess.

(569 words)

61. The movement of the world is crab-like (WBCS '65)

It is interesting to watch the movement of a crab. It does not proceed continuously in a straight line. Sometimes it moves forward, sometimes again it goes back and loses the ground it has already gained. The statement here says that the movement of the world is very much like the movement of the crab. The obvious implication is that history does not reveal continuous progress of civilization. There were times when it moved forward and man took a decisive step towards a more cultured and enlightened existence. But succeeding ages witnessed a retrogression, a climbing down from the height already reached. Those who are familiar with history of the human race in different parts of the world will at once testify to the truth of this statement. In England there was some kind of civilized life during the Roman occupation as the Roman rulers gave some attention to civilizing the land. After the Romans withdrew from England, the civilizing process seems to have been suspended for a long time. Not only that, there was a return to barbarism all over the country from which it was rescued only at the coming of Christianity. It is well known that Athens in the fifth century B. C. attained a high degree of civilization and culture. In philosophy, politics, literature, no less than in sculpture, the fame of Athens spread to all corners of the world in those days. In the field of human culture and refinement, Athens is rightly described as one of the pioneers. But the subsequent history of Athens shows that there was a decline from the high standards reached in the fifth century B. C. and Athens was no longer able to maintain her pre-eminence in the sphere of Art and literature. The history of Rome shows a similar retrogression. There was a time when Rome was justly regarded as queen of the known world and to be a Roman was a proud distinction. But she was not spared the devastation and ruin that seems to have been the inevitable lot of flourishing kingdoms in the past. As a result of barbarian invasion from the north, the glorious days of imperial Rome became forgotten history and Romans went down in the scale of civilization. In India the same story was repeated when after the decay of the Indus valley Civilization the country became the home of

wandering tribes whose mode of life was very primitive and barbaric. The fact is that centres of civilization in the past were like oases in the deserts of barbarism. For lack of suitable means of communication civilization in those days used to be concentrated in isolated places. The ground gained by centuries of toil was lost by a sudden spurt of barbaric inroad and it took hundreds of years to recover the lost ground. But in the present day, since civilization is fairly widespread and the means of communication are continuously extending its bounds, the fear of its going back like a crab as in the past no longer haunts the human race. Of course, if there be a total devastation through nuclear warfare and the present civilization is completely wiped out, the life on earth will start anew from the same old barbaric condition.

(540 words)

62. The cult of personality (WBCS '58, IAS '63)

The expression "the cult of personality" has of late come much into prominence in political parlance. It is no new cult since it has been in existence in one form or another from the times of the mighty Caesar of old to those of Napoleon, Hitler and Stalin. The recent developments in Soviet politics, which are looked upon as a challenge to the political set-up of the civilized world, appear to be based on what has been professed as repudiation of this so-called cult.

The dictatorial doctrines of Joseph Stalin practically dominated Soviet Communism for a long period. On February 17, 1956, 'the cult of personality' in Stalin was condemned by three top Soviet leaders at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in Moscow. Stalin used extreme methods and mass repressions, he became irritable and brutal and in the last period of his life and activity, the cult of his personality assumed odious forms and harmed the cause of communism. He departed from the Marxist-Leninist conception of the role of the people and the Party in the struggle for Socialism and put himself above the Party and the people, took decisions alone and practised arbitrary rule. With his posthumous dethronement, his name was struck off from every place.

Hero-worship is a common human instinct which has been conducive to both good and evil from time immemorial. Born leaders of men have often been deified as great heroes. History is replete with the exploits of such men, which have shaped the destinies of mankind. Dictatorship is born of hero-worship. In troubled times when chaos and anarchy supplant orderly progress of a nation, a dictator assumes absolute authority and restores order. As the people awake to their dignity and responsibility in course of time, democracy gradually evolves. Inordinate love of power has become the cause of misfortune of many a dictator like Adolph Hitler or Benito Mussolini, whereas benevolent dictatorship has often proved helpful to the growth of democratic instincts. The present denunciation of Stalinism in Soviet Russia and the trend towards Leninism have given a new turn to the increasing threat of international communism.

It would thus be seen that the cult of personality is not an unmixed evil. An infant nation sometimes needs a strong man of vision and understanding to put it on a firm footing by assuming in some measure dictatorial power for himself, provided of course such a man commands respect and confidence of all. The political history of Russia and China provides ample instances of uses and abuses of dictatorship. The grounds on which the cult of personality is denounced are hardly applicable to the present political set-up of India. Of course there was a tendency to decry what was characterized as one-man administration in our country and certain sections of disgruntled people frequently indulged in diatribes against it.

The very existence of India as the world's biggest democracy pursuing a policy of non-alignment with contending Power blocs, necessitated a very cautious approach to the intricate problems facing the world at large. It was no easy job to steer the ship of State clear of shoals and quicksands when tension mounted high and conflicts of views in the country became hard to reconcile. A neutral country like India required tenacity of purpose, astute statesmanship and great sagacity which were able to elicit respect and admiration of all irrespective of bloc affiliations. People who decry the so-called 'cult of personality'

in Pandit Nehru have to realise that hero-worship is not a vice if the person worshipped is a real hero. Shri Nehru's great *statesmanship definitely raised the status and prestige of the great country he led. To call him just the leader of the ruling party is utterly ridiculous for it is he alone who commanded respect and confidence of all parties despite all differences*

Since all his spirit, achievements and teachings were based on the true democratic frame-work, the evils of hero-worship or the denunciation of the cult of personality did never sway this country. (671 words)

68. The cult of the individual (WBCS '65)

One fundamental difference between Capitalism and Dictatorship on the one hand and Democracy on the other is that in the former the aim is the aggrandisement of the individual at the expense of the masses. The Capitalist wants power and influence and accumulation of wealth at the cost of millions. He does not care if ruin overtakes his country provided he can obtain what he desires for himself and his family. He wants to perpetuate his own name and the name of his family regardless of the fate of the rest of mankind. The dictator, again, is a person who wants to be regarded as the supreme authority in the State. He may start his life as a humble votary of a noble ideal but when he has acquired power and authority all his time and attention are devoted in securing the status and position already attained and for this he can even sacrifice the interest of his fellowmen or the nation. Democracy, on the other hand, is primarily interested in the well-being of the masses. In an ideal Democracy the individual is important only in so far as he contributes to the development of the nation. If, therefore, a conflict arises between the ambition of the individual and the interest of the masses, the individual will be forced to step down from the public life and retire into privacy. Not only that, if the individual aims to raise himself above the nation and seeks to divert attention from the nation's interest to himself, he is thought unworthy of serving the nation and pushed into the background. The individual, however talented, must consider himself as a humble servant of the

nation and if his ambition in any way affects the interest of the nation, he is removed. In U.S.S.R., Khrushchev after coming into power bitterly attacked Stalin who had died on the ground *that he had favoured the cult of the individual and aimed at self-aggrandisement at the expense of the nation and the Party.* Led by him Russians did not scruple to dishonour the memory of Stalin and even went so far as to disown him as a national and Party leader. By a curious freak of fortune the same fate has overtaken Khrushchev now. He has also been accused of the desire to raise himself above the Party and to monopolise the centre of the world's stage to the detriment of the Party. The difficulty is that the individual cannot wholly obliterate himself in the cause for which he works. If this was possible and individuals could selflessly pursue their ideals, this earth would have been changed into paradise long ago. So long as human nature is what it is, self will always play a major part in all human activity. But it is man's obvious duty to try to harmonise his own interests with the interests of the masses whom he professes to serve. He should see to it that his own gains do not result in loss to others (503 words)

64. On writing the history of India (WBCS '76)

How to write history is a problem which has drawn a wide variety of opinions from historiographers. To understand the problem, a study of the process followed in writing history and difficulties that arise at different stages should be most illuminating.

History is a record, a running and continuous record, of facts and events concerning a country for a specific period of time. The proper function of a historian is to state facts dispassionately, to expose events as they took place. We find in history the story of rise and fall of kings and kingdoms, of wars waged and battles fought, of conspiracies for power or for territorial conquest as well as movements for liberation of a country and the sacrifices of patriots and great souls.

It is a study of man through the ages. It is a study of his ways of life, his manners and customs, his prejudices and superstitions, his strifes and struggles. It is also a study of

nations. History tells us how nations once at the zenith of their glory have suffered decline and decay and how others have emerged from obscurity and risen to prominence and power.

Writings of European historians on Indian history are never above racial, colonial or imperial prejudices. It is, however, very difficult to distinguish truth from falsehood and facts from fictions. Thus there is a great need for rewriting the true history of India. In studying the socio-economic history one should look afresh at the sources of history and evaluate them from social, cultural, economic and other points of view. Stress should be on problems and aspirations of the people and not on chronicles of kings and their ministers. There is need for a detailed study of economic and social development during British rule. Previously emphasis was laid on study of the history of different regions of India rather than of history on a national level.

Events of India in particular and the world in general are in a continuum, chained by cause and effect. It is impossible for a single historian to record all such events, in every necessary detail. For fuller and more scientific knowledge, a ramified treatment of history appears to be more desirable. Hence in recent times, penetrative studies of various aspects of history i.e. economic, social, military etc. have come out and additions are being made every now and then. There are instances galore of palpable bias in the works of the imperialist, doctrinaire, patriotic and partisan historians which can be easily detected. If there are local people certifying Nandakumar's selflessness and nobility, there are Englishmen testifying to Hastings's honesty and uprightness. But there are histories, called objective and dispassionate, which are brilliant but unsuccessful attempts at reaching the target.

Finally, a few words may be said on the style of writing history in general, and history of India in particular. Modern view on the subject is that history should be written in strict logical sequence—without much rhetoric. But the champion of the opposite view holds that history should be written with a special effort to make it interesting and lively. History deals

with past experience of man. So, a historian should try with all the rhetoric at his command to resurrect the past with all its colours, tumults and other signs of life to make it a subject of absorbing interest.

Without being carried away by either view, attempts should be made to strike a synthesis between truthful analysis of facts and an enthralling diction. (576 words)

65. The life and deeds of an Indian hero (Misc '68)

Netaji, the founder of "Azad Hind Fouz" is the greatest Indian hero of our time. If heroism lies in sacrifice, patriotism and undaunted will to fight for freedom, we have the proud privilege of recounting the deeds of Subhas Chandra Bose, endearingly called 'Netaji' by his followers and countrymen. Born at Cuttack in 1897 he had his schooling in Orissa and joined the Presidency College in 1913 as a promising student of Philosophy. But unable to bear the insults inflicted upon Indians by Principal Oaten he taught the racist a good lesson and was, consequently, rusticated. It was on account of Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee's appreciation and initiative that he could sit for the degree Honours examination from the Scottish Church College and could secure a first class. He went to England to qualify for the I.C.S. and returned home with laurels. The Non-Co-operation Movement was at that time in full swing in India under the leadership of Mahatma. The able inspiration of C.R. Das led Subhas Bose to the movement. He gave up his membership of the I.C.S. and identified himself with the followers of Mahatma. Being overworked for a time he contacted T.B. and went to Europe for a cure. After his return he was twice elected the President of the Indian National Congress. He resigned from Congress in April, 1940 owing to differences with Gandhiji and founded the "Forward Bloc", a left-wing within the Congress. The British Government jailed him on several occasions. While under detention, he suddenly disappeared from India in 1941. He went to Germany and then to Japan to enlist their help to liberate India. The Nazis failed him but with the help of Japan he organised the I.N.A. in the South-East Asia. Leading his army in a grim battle against

the British rulers he was about to liberate the eastern part of India when the war came to an end abruptly. In Aug 1945 when he was on his way to Japan by air, the plane crashed. Since then, there have been conflicting reports about his death, but no definite proof of this accident has, so far, been available. He still occupies the heart of millions of Indians who look back with pride on his great deeds of heroism. (369 words)

(d) TOPICS ON SCIENCE

66. Humanistic studies versus Science (WBCS '69)

There seems to be a great rivalry between Science and Humanities. In the modern world, dominated by scientific inventions and mechanised industry, the prestige of science is immeasurably increased and extended. This is undoubtedly the age of science as the Medieval age was the age of religion and the Renaissance was the age of arts. Every age has its distinctive emphasis upon certain values. The new concept of education insists upon making men capable of increasing their earthly comforts as the first step in the progress from earthly happiness to Heavenly happiness. The votaries of science often make a poor estimate of the humanistic cult. But this conflict between science and humanities is, in fact, the conflict between man's physical and spiritual being. A man's day to day affairs hardly allow him any time to reflect on the ultimate reality or to study the meaning and purpose of his existence. But man does not live by bread alone. His living is partly mental, partly physical. A world without art is a sordid place, full of monotony and mechanised routines. Literature, philosophy and history are as much needed to make us complete men as science is.

The study of science has, no doubt, unravelled the mysteries of our physical being and made human beings the master, not slave of the various forces of nature, although the ultimate mastery is still beyond the grasp of men. Were it not for the men of science, i. e. Galileo and Newton, the black magic of superstition would have blinded us to the marvels of physical

being ? It can hardly be denied that the physical basis of our existence has been illuminated by men of science who have devoted their energies to the study of physical forces. But even men of science have realized that the ultimate glory of a beautiful life is to be led not by the pursuit of science but by the evaluation of man's inherent qualities, his innerself. Those who decry one branch of study over another refuse to take into account the full man. Hence, for them the study of science is antithetic to the study of humanities.

Of course, some eminent thinkers have failed to correlate man's physical and spiritual manifestation in their studies. Either they have glorified science at the cost of man's spiritual entity or have idealized the life of meditation over that of scientific investigation. But a great deal of this superstition or prejudice about the relative merits of the study of science or humanities will disappear with the stocktaking of man's achievement so far. Man's achievement does not surely confine itself to a few discoveries of science but to his emergence as a rational being who can master his own problems. Man is truly the measure of the universe ; and however great his scientific discoveries may be he will have to be rich in his mind to make the best of this life. Even scientists or technocrats who are not rich in their mental acquisition, fail miserably in making a proper use of their skills. So there should be no more conflicts between the study of science and humanities for fuller realization of man's faculties. (529 words)

67. Science and Internationalism (WBCS '51)

There is great difficulty in achieving political internationalism, but such is not the case with scientific internationalism. Science is no longer the monopoly of a few, nor is it confined to the limits of any country, but it has an international field of activity. This is an age of science and the benefits derived from all discoveries and practical achievements of science are being jointly shared by all the countries. Whatever happens in one part of the world are transmitted to the other parts instantaneously through Telecommunication, Teleprinter and Photo Telegram system. Through Television distant objects can be

witnessed and through Radio and Wireless a direct communion with different nations can be maintained. Air, land and water have been conquered and the distance or height is no bar now-a-days. Thus through the advent of science, international relationship has grown in modern times among various nations of the world. Colour, race, language and nationality do not now stand in the way of formation of close kinship of nations through this tie of science. Universality is most noticeable in science. The progress of science so far achieved is not the product of inventions and discoveries made by some scientists of any particular country, but it is the cumulative effect of inventions and discoveries of all the scientists of all the countries and spread over ages. It has often been found that what was established only in theory by a scientist of any country was later developed by scientists of other countries and given the final shape by some other scientists after an interval of time. The progress of science will be retarded if its international character is changed. All the countries are now striving to find out the best application of science in industries and in other spheres of activities and explore new fields of science for the welfare of mankind. The discoveries in the field of medicine have undoubtedly saved millions of lives irrespective of their nationality. It is evident that science and internationalism are almost inter-twined with one another. (340 words)

68. The social function of science (WBCS '53)

This is an age of science and there remains almost nothing unattainable or unconquerable before the march of science. Science is progressing everyday and one cannot but feel amazed to think of inventions and discoveries of science one after the other. It has influenced powerfully all branches of life, has revolutionized the art of production and has changed the mental outlook of the world. The results of laboratory research have been applied in practical life and the steed of science has been harnessed to the chariot of industry. The progress of science has been stupendous.

The science has a great social function since all our business

and the daily necessities of life are now closely connected with science. The developments of the electrical engineering, the chemical industries, the means of transport and communications, or of the use of rubber, alloy, steels, plastics etc. are all the products of science. To it we owe knowledge of the hydrogenation of petrol, the cure of diabetes, anaesthetics, plant-breeding and so on. Science has done notable works in the fields of medicine, surgery, education, agriculture and industry. Thus X'ray, ultraviolet, penicillin and other valuable drugs and surgical experiments are doing inestimable services to the society in fighting out diseases and epidemics. Due to these researches eyes are now restored to the blind, hearing to the deaf, legs to the lame and so on and so forth. The modern science even claims to change a man into a woman and *vice versa*. Even heart transplantation and replacement of various limbs of the human body have been possible through the advent of science.

Among the abstract sciences are such branches of study as metaphysics, statistics and mathematics. Among the applied sciences may be included economics, education, medicine, engineering, metallurgy, agriculture, sociology, psychology and anthropology.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, science has done miracles. It has conquered distance. Railway trains, motor cars, steamships and aeroplanes have made it possible for us to travel from one end of the world to another. The telephone and the wireless have made it possible to talk with another man or to send messages at a great distance in a very short time. It is due to science that man has conquered the world of land, sea and air, has reached the summit of the highest mountain, has dived under the sea and is contemplating to make an easy traffic even in the Space. Electricity has been harnessed to serve man ; it moves trains and lifts, gives light, cooks our food and makes our life pleasant by regulating the temperature of the house according to our wish. In the field of medicine, science has made great progress and most of the diseases have been controlled. Jenner's vaccination, Pasteur's anti-rabic inoculation and Lister's anti-septic treatment are great achievements in

medical and surgical art. X-rays have enabled doctors in modern days easily to diagnose internal fractures and disorders. The ultra-violet rays are used in curing many ailments. Radio-active isotopes are being used, like radium, for the treatment of tumours, cancer, blood disorders etc. In other fields also science has done much for the security and happiness of mankind. Safety lamps save many lives in mines everyday. Photography has added to human happiness. Gramophone. Radio, Television and Cinema render great recreations in our life. Through the Press and Radio we come to know almost anything and everything happening in the world. Artificial irrigation and destruction of poisonous insects and pests by scientific methods have greatly combated evils of life. Scientific researches have removed superstitions, ignorance and illiteracy and have popularised knowledge through printing; have rendered all round improvement of industry and agriculture; have devised means for increasing food production and protection of crops and cattle and manufacture of various pharmaceutical and perfumery compounds.

By promoting literacy and culture, by alleviating human miseries and by increasing the wealth of the country, science has greatly improved the modern society. (652 words)

69. **The effects of scientific research on social life.**

(CL '52)

This is an age of science and the influence of science on our social life is felt in every moment. The growth and progress of social life depends much on the scientific researches, which preserve humanity from the ravages of diseases and other onslaughts of Nature and confer innumerable blessings and comforts on mankind. We are here considering only one aspect of science, viz. as a builder of nation and social life, the other aspect as a destroyer of mankind and their property being left out from present consideration. It is through the efforts of science and scientific researches that we got motor cars, aeroplanes, railway trains, radio, photography, electric lights and fans, telegraph, telephone, talkie and a host of other scientific inventions of everyday use. Most of our articles of necessity or of luxury are the products of science and our social

life has been so moulded now-a-days that we cannot even conceive of going without them. Science has done notable work in the fields of medicine, surgery, education, agriculture and industry. Thus X-ray, ultraviolet, penicillin and other valuable drugs and surgical experiments are doing inestimable services to the society in fighting out diseases and epidemics. Due to these researches, eyes are now restored to the blind, hearing to the deaf, legs to the lame and so on and so forth. The modern science even claims to change a man into a woman. The blind are no more a burden to the society but they acquire education through Braille script and do immense service to the society. Scientific researches have removed superstitions, ignorance and illiteracy and have popularised knowledge through printing, have rendered all round improvements of industry and agriculture, have devised means for increasing food production and protection of crops and cattle and manufacture of various pharmaceutical and perfumery compounds, heavy and fine chemicals, plastic mouldings etc. Scientific researches have increased the speed and removed distances. It is now easy to speak with the people of distant places over the telephone, to know the world affairs through newspapers or radio, to go beneath the sea and to move high in the air. The cities are now planned scientifically with electric or gas lights in the streets and houses, filtered water connections and various means of transport and conveyances. Big buildings are fitted with electric lifts and air-conditioning devices. In a word, science can alone solve successfully the various social problems arising out of hunger and poverty, insanitation and wastage of vast resources of a country and thus it forms an integral part of modern life.

Social life undergoes changes along with the new advent of science over Nature. The rural India being detached from scientific development is still lying in backwardness and its social order remains rather stagnant. The scientific researches have brought comfort, luxury and ease to our social life. On the other hand mass unemployment and existence of over-worked, underfed and half-taught labouring class are some of the necessary evils which have come in the process of improvement brought about through scientific researches. (508 words)

70. Science and Society (WBCS '58, IAS '61)

The term 'society' in its broad connotation implies a community of people held together by a common purpose or by ties of common interest. *It is not a clumsy conglomeration of miscellaneous elements, but a group founded on certain laws or system.*

Science, likewise, is not a mere jumble of knowledge gathered from various sources in a haphazard manner, but is a systematized knowledge obtained by means of reasoning and observation.

Scientific laws are deduced through theories, hypotheses, observations and experiments in man's venture to probe the mysteries that surround him and to widen as much as he can the bounds of human knowledge. Based on the laws thus deduced, new discoveries and to the amenities of life and supply more and more power to combat the forces of Nature as well as to attain ends both good and evil. In a society, too, laws are adhered to, which evolve in course of time from observation of the habits, manners and customs of the people who live together. Sociology or social science has developed in this way. Science, therefore, plays a great part in the growth, development and proper functioning of a society.

The individual is the unit of the society and the welfare of the society as a whole naturally rests on the well-being of the individual. The intellectual curiosity to know things constitutes the scientific passion for knowledge. Man being the dynamic unit of the society, it can never remain static, but goes on evolving from change to change. Fresh discoveries bring about fresh changes and outlook in the society, as it assimilates the products of human experience as revealed by science.

Scientific discoveries may well be utilised for the well-being of the society, not only by widening the bounds of human knowledge, but also by adding to the amenities of life in many ways. Scientists are constantly engaged in devising fresh ways and means for harnessing the might of Nature for man's benefit. The science has a great social function since all our business

and the daily necessities of life are now closely connected with science. The developments of the electrical engineering, the chemical industries, the means of transport and communications or of the use of rubber, alloy, steel, plastics etc., are all the products of science. Electricity has been harnessed to serve man; it moves trains and lifts, gives light, cooks our food and makes our life pleasant by regulating the temperature of the house according to our wish. It is due to science that man has conquered the world of land, sea and air, has reached the summit of the highest mountain, has dived under the sea and is contemplating to make easy traffic even in the Space. Gramophone, radio, television and cinema render great recreations in our life. Science has done notable work in the fields of medicine, surgery, education, agriculture and industry. Thus X-ray, ultra-violet, penicillin, and other valuable drugs and surgical experiments are doing inestimable services to the society in fighting out diseases and epidemics.

Scientific researches have removed superstitions, ignorance and illiteracy and have popularised knowledge through printing. The present 'Atomic Age' or 'Sputnik Age', as it is sometimes called, has opened up vistas of human knowledge hitherto undreamt of. Ideas have been completely revolutionized and outlook on life is broadening more and more. Scientific discoveries bring about changes in the social and moral standards of life. Old beliefs and theories and religious dogmas are discarded or re-oriented in the light of the truths which science reveals to us from age to age. As man advances from strength to strength through growth of scientific knowledge, the society is ceaselessly on its march onward.

By promoting literacy and culture, by alleviating human miseries and by increasing the wealth of the country, science has been a real benefactor of the society. (638 words)

71. Every branch of science will provide us, with illustrations showing how appearances of the simplest kind, when skilfully probed, reveal intricacies of design and varieties of material which the laymen at first cannot credit

Or, Scientific probe of simple things (WBCS '60)

The present age is appropriately called the Age of Science. We may also call it the Age of Specialization. Every branch of science is striving to reveal to us the truths that lie hidden in Nature. As civilization advances, the struggles of man against the forces of Nature are becoming keener and keener from day to day. Ceaseless experiments have been utilizing the hidden energies in Nature for the service of man. In making these efforts scientists are lighting upon fresh revelations. Intricate instruments have been devised to explore things that escape the naked eye.

"The meanest flower that blows can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears", says poet Wordsworth. To the Botanist, "the meanest flower" reveals under the microscope and other devices a vast store of knowledge. A tiny petal, a tender leaf, a half-hidden blade reveal intricacies of form and hue which overwhelm and fascinate. A common phenomenon which hardly strikes the sight becomes a source of a startling discovery to a keen observer. Who ever thought that the common phenomenon of a lid of a kettle of boiling water jumping up and down would lead to the discovery of Steam Power? Following the experiments carried on by James Watt we have to-day the tremendous power of the steam-engine. Thus the water we drink has been made to serve us. To the chemist it has yielded the secret that it is nothing but a combination of two transparent gases, oxygen and hydrogen, each of which has incalculable use for us in various ways. Could anyone ever have it in his wildest imagination that hydrogen from the innocent looking water, might one day become the main ingredient of a terrible weapon of wholesale devastation? When molecules and atoms were first discovered in the elements, it was beyond the wildest fancy that the energy released by splitting an atom was capable, in a single device, to reduce a big city like Hiroshima into shambles. To-day we live in what is aptly called, the Atomic Age and the possibilities of atomic energy appear practically limitless.

The air we breathe, the earth we tread on and the fire we light with a match-stick have yielded, in a large measure, their secrets to the scientists. On analysis it has been found three

main gases, oxygen, nitrogen and carbon dioxide compose the air. Under the microscope and on chemical analysis the soil under our feet has revealed the existence of a large variety of substances, each of which has its individual function and use. Fire is, we know, a manifestation of glowing heat. To the physicist it is now infinitely more than a mere physical fact, its infinite capabilities having been detected and harnessed in a variety of ways.

Ordinary sunlight, to which we are so accustomed, breaks up into seven distinct colours when viewed through a prism and the rainbow is its demonstration in the great laboratory of Nature. A loud report goes on echoing far away. It is a very common phenomenon. Great scientists have made use of this phenomenon in inventing what we have to-day as wireless telegraphy, radio and other momentous devices. The flashes of lightning noticed in a storm-cloud are now not mere demons of Shelley's fancy. Experiments have now succeeded in harnessing electrical energy to such an extent that electricity has now become a slave of mankind. Thus a good number of things which are apparently of a very simple nature, have, on proper probe and analysis revealed many new things and opened up a store-house of our knowledge. (595 words)

72. Limitations of Science (WBCS '61, IAS '54)

Or, Science is not enough (IAS '64)

We are apt to wax eloquent over the gifts of science. With glowing pride we mention the various material comforts that science has placed at human disposal. On the material plane there is no doubt that modern life is much richer in content than life in the past. But in our admiration of science, however justified, we should not shut our eyes to its obvious limitations. In spite of the phenomenal progress of science in recent times, there is the same spectacle of abject poverty and destitution by the side of plenty that there was before science won its success. If anything, the filth and squalor of life in its lower storeys is on the increase. They have also no peace of mind since their demands on life have multiplied without any visible means of getting them fulfilled. Even in the upper storeys, peace is a rare commodity. There they have had to

pay the price of mental disequilibrium to secure physical comforts.

When one comes to think of it, the impact of science has been felt only on the surface of life. One of the reasons that have vitiated human relations since the dawn of history is war between different peoples. Sages and thinkers have preached the necessity of eliminating war and living in fraternal relations with each other. They have taught that man's progress towards a higher life will remain a dream if the scourge of war continues to stalk the earth. Science has not only made no contribution towards the achievement of this desired goal, but if anything, by making deadly weapons available to man and by introducing a competitive spirit it has brought the chances of a destructive war nearer. If we judge the worth of a thing by its contribution towards a life of ideal perfection then science cannot be rated very highly.

Science has wrested from Nature some of her secrets and utilised this knowledge in the service of man. But it is still far from attaining a complete mastery over the processes of Nature. For the most part the working of Nature is still unpredictable. There is no accurate means of knowing when a hurricane will burst or a flood surge down from the hills. Science is also powerless to put a curb upon the ravages of the elements. It hopes one day to be able to tighten its hold on Nature but as yet the hold is very feeble.

In another direction the limitations of science are obvious. It has had practically no effect upon the most intimate of human concerns. The mystery of life remains unexplained as before. It has yet to throw light upon the complex behaviour pattern of individual human life. Experiences of the soul in intimate communion with God, instinctive perception of a seer, the scriptures claiming a direct vision of the ultimate Reality, all these are patently beyond the range of science. It has given us a picture of the cosmos with the stars and planets in their appointed orbits but the supreme intelligence that regulates the activity of everything from the smallest to the biggest and holds the worlds in space is beyond its power to explain.

(531 words)

73. The scientific invention the world needs most today*(WBCS '64)*

There may be difference of opinion on this question of scientific invention that the world needs most today. It may be argued that the most needful scientific invention in these days would be one that would help to outlaw war and establish amity and goodwill throughout the world. It may also be argued that it would be one that would facilitate journey through outer space so as to help establish man's suzerainty over the moon and other planets of the sun. But in my humble view a more pressing problem than the conquest of space or securing peace in the world should now engage the attention of scientists all over the world. The problem is how to remove the imbalance between food resources and the ever-growing number of mouths to be fed. It is true that with the progress of science new avenues will be discovered for the supply of food to earth's hungry millions. But there will inevitably be a limit to such discoveries. If the world's population goes on increasing at the present rate, the limit will be reached soon indeed. The prospect of earth's teeming millions doomed to starvation and eventually to total annihilation is not a bright one to contemplate. The only alternative before the scientist, therefore, is to find out something, some easy and popular method of controlling the alarming growth of population. There are, of course, various brands of contraceptives and medicines in the market, but they are neither foolproof nor very popular in use. Since the problem has connection with sex and reproduction, it is sometimes thought to be too indelicate for open and unreserved discussion. But, if it continues to be neglected on this ground, it is sure enough to produce incalculable consequences which can better be imagined. Scientists should not allow themselves to be deterred by any such scruples. They should apply their minds to the discovery of some form of contraceptive or medicine which is absolutely reliable, simple in its application and easy of access to people living in towns and villages alike. If the world is to be saved from annihilation it is imperative that this should be done without delay. Conquest of Space or establishment of peace in the world, while the population is

allowed to explode at the present rate, cannot save it from ruin. Alongside of this, concerted attempts should be made by the Government and humanitarian organisation to induce people to taking advantage of scientific methods of birth control. It cannot be too much emphasised that the problem is assuming alarming proportions with the passing of time.

(434 words)

74. The wonders of modern science

(*Misc.* '68)

Like the magic wand that transforms everything, science is creating wonders almost everyday. What was once sheer fantasy is now almost a reality by virtue of the recent achievements of men of science. Take, for instance, the moon itself. Once, the dream of lovers and poets, ever beyond the reach of men, has now been reduced to almost a week's journey for spacemen, the astronauts. While America is proposing to land a few spacemen on the moon, Russia is aiming at unmanned flights to Venus and Mars. Already a Soviet automatic station 'Venus-4' made soft landing on Venus and sent back valuable information about the Venusian atmosphere and surface temperature. US unmanned probe vehicles Viking I & II, landed on Mars in July-Sept 1976 and sent back to earth invaluable information relating to that planet. This journey to space, however, is only one of the many facets of the achievements of modern science. In another sphere, chemists have invented the wonder drugs by which fatal diseases could be controlled. The disease of consumption is no longer a terror to men. It can be cured by the application of medicine in proper time. But the latest wonders in the field of surgery—the human heart-transplant, first accomplished by the South African physician Dr. Christian Barnard, has thrown open new doors to the magic of scientific cure of ailments. By transplanting the heart of a young girl, Denis Ann Darwell, who died of a car accident, in the chest of Louis Washkansky, Dr. Barnard has ushered in a new era of surgery. In fact, transplantation of human organs is quite possible now to save the lives of men. In the advanced countries of the world television has come to be a wonderful medium of the audio-visual method of learning.

Television photographs about the movement of astronauts on the moon were seen on earth. By the device of electromagnetic waves, photographs of Venus and Mars, millions of miles away, were transmitted by spacecrafts to the earth. Electronic brains and computers are accomplishing wonders of calculation and processing in factories and plants in industrially advanced countries. Nuclear energy is being harnessed by modern science to peaceful purposes to achieve many more wonders in life. Thus atomic energy is producing electrical power and the radioactive isotopes and tracers are doing marvels in the fields of agriculture and industry (384 words)

75. Prospects of Space travel ((WBCS '59, '67, IAS '67,
Misc '76)

When aeroplane was not invented, man longed to fly like birds in the sky. When at last man started flying across the open sky on aeroplanes, he wanted to know what was there in other cosmic bodies, in other satellites.

Russia and America pioneered the joy of exploring the vast space in the upper air. When Gagarin of Russia on April 12, 1961 circled round the earth for about an hour, he created history. Valentina Tereshkova of Russia later created history in another direction by being the first woman in outer space. America did not lag behind. Thus Soviet Luna, Vostok, Soyuz and Venus and American Apollo, Mariner and Viking went out from time to time for exploring the space. To Russia goes the credit of making the first unmanned spacecraft land on the moon. America on the other hand, shot ahead by marking the moon with footprints of man when Neil Armstrong and Col. Edwin Aldrin landed on the moon on 22. 7. 69.

The moon thus conquered and known, man looked further beyond, to the Martian land. American's first earth-orbiting big space station, *Skylab*, with a well-equipped sophisticated laboratory was launched on 14.5.73 and several astronauts were sent there in three batches to conduct space experiments. *Viking I and II*, the unmanned US probes to Mars, launched on 20.8.75, and 9.9.75, soft-landed on Mars on 20.7.76 and

49.76 respectively to probe for life with an automated scientific laboratory and sent back clear pictures of their findings to the earth. Viking I has detected nitrogen and argon gases in the atmosphere and some trace of oxygen in Martian soil but no organic matter. Neither Viking I nor Viking II could find any trace of life on the Red Planet. The massive expenditure on the mission brought credit to US space scientists even though the results were disproportionate to the investment.

If any life, no matter how simple, is found to exist in a Planet other than ours, then man will be happy to know that he is not a cosmic freak, that he is not alone. (332 words)

76. What arguments can be offered for and against the possibility of life on other planets (WBCS '68)

Man has never ceased to believe in the possibility of life on other planets though a great scientist like James Jeans has categorically stated that our universe was "clearly not designed for life". With the ushering in of the space age which has already seen a few man-made satellites explore into the space, our expectations have become all the more stronger.

But life as we see it on earth came into being under some favourable conditions. Some of these elementary conditions are that the temperature of the planet must be neither too high nor too low, and the planet must be of sufficient size and weight to be able to retain its atmosphere. There should also be some amount of oxygen and water vapour in the atmosphere to make the life in some form possible. Now, let us consider which of the other planets fulfil those conditions, that are conducive to the generation and expansion of life.

Firstly, the satellite *Moon* cannot sustain any organisms because of its lack of water and atmosphere. Sharp temperature changes varying widely from 241° F. to -148° F. and intensive solar radiation on the lit side are also a great obstacle to life processes. The dust, rock and soil samples of the *Moon* collected by the astronauts, who actually set foot on the *Moon* and strolled around, do not reveal any possibility of life on the *Moon* even of any primitive stage.

Of the planets in the solar system, *Mercury* appears to be

almost entirely devoid of any atmosphere. The temperature of the place is of the molten zinc in that part of the planet which turns its face to the sun. The other face of the planet is extremely cold. This planet is unsuitable for any life. As for *Venus*, the information gathered from the Soviet Spaceship "*Venus-4*" reveals that the surface temperature of *Venus* varies from 40° C. to 280° C. and 90 to 95 p. c. of the atmosphere contains Carbon Dioxide. The high temperature of *Venus* precludes protein life but the lower range of temperature at some part of the planet may sustain some sort of life especially the primitive vegetable life that once existed on this earth.

The average temperature of the surface of *Mars* is lower than that on earth. The density of its atmosphere is 10 times less than that on earth, with very small oxygen content and little water vapour. Still there is no reason to deny the possibility of some sort of organisms existing on *Mars*.

Jupiter and *Saturn* have atmospheres, but scientific observations indicate that there is complete absence of oxygen and water vapour which are indispensable for life. The atmosphere of these planets are constituted of hydrogen, marsh-gas and ammonia in which we cannot conceive of any life. Condition are still worse in *Uranus* and *Neptune* where atmospheres are still colder than that of other planets and marsh-gas is more predominant than ammonia. *Pluto*, which is the smallest among them all, has such a cold atmosphere that neither nitrogen nor oxygen could exist there.

There are some interesting novels and science fictions which describe the life and living of different types of creatures with highly improved brain in *Venus* and *Mars*, who keep constant watch on earth by sending flying saucers and hold such strength as to stop the life on earth if they so desire,

After all, man's recent journey into the space may one day land him among some creatures hitherto unknown and inconceivable to us. According to some scientists, life is not unique in our earth alone and a large number of planets around a large number of stars in the universe have life in different forms.

(603 words)

77. Science in the modern world (WBCS '52, '70)

The other day the two Apollo-14 astronauts joined their colleagues in the mother-ship 'Kitty Hawk' after completing man's longest walk on the surface of the moon. This was as thrilling a performance as the despatching of the moon-taxi 'Lunokhod' to the moon itself for undertaking a survey of the earth's satellite. Both America and Russia have thus yoked science to the difficult job of conquering the space, a task of which people of the previous generation could only dream. H. G. Wells's science fiction has almost come to be lived up by the people of this generation through the gifts of modern science.

Now, this stupendous advancement of scientific learning and research has also its influence on various other walks of life. Use of nuclear energy for constructive purposes has come to be a striking feature of the Western World of science. Who can deny with what a rapid pace medicine has stepped forward into the most difficult realm of surgery and cure? Heart transplant patients have lived and worked and are doing so still. Even the most formidable disease cancer seems to be well under control or promises to be so in the near future. There are still more ambitious plans in the hands of scientists : they propose to unearth the very mystery of life's creation and a test-tube genius would not be an impossibility in the coming years.

With the exploration of science our age has come to be jet-set and soon we can expect to have a world-wide network of television through the man-made satellites travelling in the space. To reach London or New York one will have to spend only a short time in supersonic jets as does a commuter from Sealdah to reach his home in Suburbs. Radio-photos fill our newspapers everyday and teleprinters encircle the world. We have also the proud privilege of controlling our mighty rivers and floods, turning deserts into green fields. All this only shows how science is getting ready to overcome all possible human limitations. By promoting literacy and culture, by alleviating human miseries and by increasing production and

wealth of the country, science has greatly improved the modern society.

Yet, we live in a world of poverty, squalor and dirt and fail to appreciate with what keenness the common people are trying to endure the grim irony of their lives. Malnutrition, ignorance, superstition and disease make a common cause with appalling poverty to spoil the lives of millions of people in the underdeveloped countries. Who cares for these helpless and wretched people—the down-trodden of the society? While men rush to the moon and develop more and more sophisticated weapons of destruction, millions of underfed, ill-clad and ill-nourished people, wallowing in ignorance and superstition worship their Gods of Darkness all over the world. Is that how science flourishes in the modern world for only a limited few?

Notwithstanding increased trade and commerce and scientific ways of production of goods we find unemployment and starvation everywhere. The benefits of science seem to be far outweighed by its potentialities for evil. The present age is commonly described as the 'atomic age'. Atomic energy bids fair to revolutionize our ways of living and outlook on life. But while ushering in a new era of human civilization, atomic science is threatening humanity with extinction. Invention of terrible nuclear weapons by the scientists may at any moment bring about our total annihilation. Thus advent of science in the modern civilization has failed to satisfy the spiritual cravings of man and to contribute to his moral uplift. (590 words)

78. The contribution of science to the modern outlook of life. (IAS67, WBCS '73)

We are living in an age of science. Science has brought about revolutionary changes in all spheres of life. In our everyday life we enjoy the gifts of science. The multiplication of the conveniences of life is the characteristic of the modern age. Science plays a very important role in our daily life. It has also changed our outlook on life. Science has done notable work in the fields of medicine, surgery, education, agriculture and industry. Thus X-ray, ultraviolet, penicillin and

other valuable drugs are doing inestimable services to the society. The blind are now no more a burden to the society. Scientific researches have increased the speed of transport and removed distances through various communication services. Atomic energy bids fair to revolutionize our ways of living and outlook on life.

Nowadays we adopt a scientific attitude towards our food and dress. We are now conscious about the value of different types of food. Even uneducated men of today know something about protein and vitamins. Our ancestors had no ideas about balanced diet. But we know well what items of food should be taken to keep us healthy. Modern food habits of the people show the influence of science on their minds. The modern attitude towards dress is also scientific. Now it is possible to wear comfortable garments in all seasons of the year.

Intellectual maturity is the characteristic of a modern man. Science has achieved the intellectual deliverance of mankind. It has created disinterested intellectual curiosity which is the life-blood of civilization. A modern man is intellectually hungry. He observes facts with a critical spirit. He judges men and things by the rule of reason, not by the impulse of prejudice or caprice. A man is said to have a modern outlook on life when he keeps his mind free from prejudices and superstitions. Science is mainly responsible for the elimination of prejudices and superstitions from our minds.

A man who has the modern outlook on life does not attach any importance to emotions. In this age of science emotions are regarded as attributes of the pre-scientific age. How many lovers in the past had become emotional at the sight of the moon surrounded by twinkling stars in the night sky ! Now the mystery of the moon is revealed to us. Science has deprived the moon of its power to throw lovers into raptures of emotion.

Materialism is the essential characteristic of the present age. A modern man is materialistic in his outlook on life. Science has made us materialistic by increasing the convenience of life. A modern man has the capacity for refined pursuits, but he

seldom thinks of the spiritual aspects of life. In western countries science has made tremendous progress. So the western people have become more materialistic in their attitude towards life.

Scepticism is another sign of the modern outlook on life. Indeed, the spirit of reverence has become a thing of the past in the modern age. We have come to doubt everything even the existence of God. Darwin's theory of evolution shook man's faith in God. Now with the progress of science it has been possible to control the elements to some extent. So a modern man has practically no faith in God. Thus the modern civilization, which is a product of science, has failed to satisfy the spiritual cravings of man and to contribute to his moral uplift.

From the above discussion it follows that a modern man is known by his scientific bent of mind. The modern outlook on life is really a product of science. (595 words)

79. The essential knowledge of science and technology for the common man in everyday life. (WBCS '74)

Science has greatly accelerated the tempo of life ; it has bestowed upon us comforts and amenities undreamt of by our ancestors. In the past science was the servant of a privileged few. Today it is the willing hand-maiden of the common man.

Now-a-days science and technology play an important role in everyday life of the common man. A common man is roused from his sleep by the alarm clock. He washes his mouth with tooth-paste. His breakfast is cooked on the stove or a gas-oven or an electric heater. He reads newspapers. He shaves his beard with a safety razor. He goes to his place of occupation by tram or bus. He enjoys cinema shows after the day's hard work. He enjoys radio programmes before going to bed. In summer electric fans keep the air of his bedroom cool. He may also use a Transistor, Tape-recorder or a T.V. set in his leisure hours. Thus it is seen that a common man uses the gifts of science and technology by day and night.

A common man of the present age enjoys innumerable gifts of science and technology in his daily life. So he is expected

to acquire some knowledge of science and technology. For example, he should have a clear idea about the value of different types of food. He is expected to know something about carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins and minerals. He should know what a balanced diet is. He should form his food habits in a scientific manner. If he acquires scientific knowledge of food, he will be able to keep himself healthy without spending much on expensive food-stuffs.

A common man of the present century requires some scientific knowledge about dress. He should know the utility of different types of dress. He should be conscious of the overwhelming importance of sunlight for the tissues of the body. He is expected to know the harmful effects of wearing tight-fitting clothes. On the whole, he should be scientific in the matter of dress.

Electricity has now become a constant companion of a common man in his every-day life. So he should have some knowledge of electricity. A man who uses electric appliances without any knowledge of electricity runs the risk of being electrocuted one day. A man who uses a bi-cycle must know something about its different parts. A driver of a car must have some knowledge of motor mechanism. A common man has to gather some knowledge of science and technology in order to run his family smoothly.

In the modern age a common man has to acquire some knowledge of hygiene and sanitation. He must know how to keep his house free from dirt and germs of diseases. Thus he should be acquainted with the technique of spraying insecticides in his rooms. A common man of today has to take some medicines in his daily life. He cannot go to a dispensary everyday. So he must know the use of popular drugs.

A common man of today, whether living in urban or rural areas, knows the utility of vaccination and cholera inoculation. They are also now aware of the family planning techniques. The farmers in the field know the science and technology of making a bumper production of crops and to protect the harvest by spraying insecticides.

A common man now-a-days is more or less familiar with

the uses and general mechanism of all the scientific things used in their everyday life. This knowledge of science and technology can sweeten his daily life. (584 words)

(e) TOPICS ON RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

80. **The conflict of ideals in modern India** (WBCS '53)

An ideal is a fixed idea or assemblages of ideas seated enthroned in our minds which guides our conduct and shapes our life. Every wise man makes for himself an ideal ; he finds out what he wants to be and sets that before him as an object to be gained. Like individuals, nations have also ideals. These national ideals are largely created by the thinkers of the nations, who voice the ideals of groups or parties or the people of the country as a whole.

There are two opposite ideals in modern India—the Western Ideal and the Eastern Ideal. The Western Ideal is that of the strong, free, independent, self-reliant man, in whom rights are inborn and the individualism and personal liberty are triumphant. The virtues of public spirit, patriotism and the like grew out of the ideal of the free and independent man ; personal dignity, self-respect, the sense of justice etc. have also their root in this ideal of the strong and free man. It inspires to courage, to endurance, to resistance of injustice and oppression. It gives birth to men of action rather than to Sages and Philosophers.

The Eastern Ideal is embodied in the one word Dharma or Duty. This ideal arose out of the religion, the fundamental teaching of which was unity and one Reality as the root of all beings. Thus each man was but a part of the whole and not isolated or independent of others. He had numerous obligations and by his very living he was constantly adding to his debts. No man exists for himself and for his own separate ends ; he exists for all and for the common ends. The ideal of India from ancient times was the Man Dutiful, who recognised all his obligations and lived as part of greater whole. Thus while the

Western Ideal is aggressive, combative, and tending to separateness, the other is yielding, peaceful and tending to unity. An important result flowing from the ideal of Duty is that the failure of one of two parties in a relation to do his duty does not excuse the other from doing his. While there should be reciprocity to make the relation perfect, yet duty must be done even to the undutiful.

All antagonistic ideals operating in the present day Society, Religion and the State are mere off-shoots of the fundamental conflict between these two dominant ideals. In society, the system of the castes has fallen into disuse ; and untouchability has become a menace and even a crime, There is also the spirit of irreligion increasingly gaining ground in the mind and life of the modern man. Secular ends of life are threatening to become the be-all and end-all of civilized existence. There is no longer any serious faith in a life after death. The women, who are becoming more and more educated, are naturally asserting their independent existence.

In the realm of politics, Democracy has replaced Aristocracy. In the East, liberty was ensured to the individual by the careful ordering of the society and the rightful observance by the Aristocracy of the rules laid down by the ancient Rishis. But in modern times democracy, which provides equal opportunities to all citizens, prevails. The aristocracy grew out of the eastern ideal while the democracy grew out of the Western. There is also a conflict of ideals leading to a capitalistic or a socialistic economy of the country. There are, as a result, many political organisations, such as the Congress, the Communist Party, the Communist Party (Marxist), the Socialist Party, the Jana Sangha and the Forward Bloc. The party system disprove that there is a full-fledged democracy yet in this country. There is also another conflict in the ideals to be followed by the Indian Union in its foreign affairs when the world has been divided into two Power-blocs dominated by the Imperialist and Capitalistic ideals and the Communist ideals, India has, however, followed a policy of friendship with other nations and is playing the role of the Third Power in the

peace movement. Thus India is passing through the conflict of ideals both within and without. (689 words)

81. Religion belongs to an early stage of human development and its rapid decay in the world in recent years is evidence of a very genuine progress.
(WBCS '61)

Or, Religion is the opiate of the people. (IAS '65)

One feature of modern life, too obvious to be overlooked, is the declining hold of religion. One reason for this is, undoubtedly, the triumph of human reason as expressed in the rapid march of science. In the ultimate analysis religion is the offspring of fear and a feeling of helplessness. When primitive man found himself at the mercy of elements and had no means of ascertaining how they worked, they made them into Gods and tried to appease them by prayer and sacrifice. Hence they believed in many Gods, each being supposed to preside over a particular department of Nature. These ideas flourished in the fertile soil of ignorance and superstition and in course of time there came a class of people, priests and men of religion, who wanted to serve their own interests by exploiting popular ignorance. In the middle ages the hold of religion upon human life was very much tightened because the Church in order to preserve its ascendancy upon the mass mind refused it any measure of enlightenment. With the coming of Renaissance, human reason, so long suppressed, began to assert itself and enquire into the grounds of the beliefs popularly held. It began to understand and explain the hidden processes of Nature. The fear that gripped the human mind in the face of perfectly natural happenings began to give way to a feeling of strength and self-assurance. Thus the basis on which the structure of formal religion had been reared through the centuries was destroyed. During the last two hundred years the rapid development of science has been able to offer very simple explanation of frightful natural phenomena. With his growing mastery over the forces of Nature man is becoming increasingly sceptical about the necessity for religion. There are people who go so far as to assert that religion is a

relic of man's ignorant past and he owes it to himself to remove all traces of it from the earth.

Considered in this way, the declining strength of religion is surely a measure of human progress. It shows that man is becoming conscious of his own powers and is no longer a plaything of unexplained natural forces. But from a deeper point of view the lessening of importance of religion affords no ground for complacency. For religion, in the more fundamental sense, is a symbol of the inscrutable mystery that develops all life on earth. Respect for this mystery is respect for life itself. A man untouched by a feeling for the mysterious profundities of existence has no conception of the higher destiny in store for man. Science in explaining nature has only removed false ideas of religion but by its inability to explain the basis of life it has only deepened the sense of the inscrutable mystery of existence. If man ceases to have a sense of this, the fact is to be deplored rather than made an occasion for celebration. Happily the greatest minds of the present day, far from decrying religion, pay their respectful homage to it in this deeper sense. (509 words)

82. Is religion a bar to progress ? (WBCS '74)

It is a popular belief of the present age that religion is a bar to progress, or alternatively, the modern life and society are marked by the declining hold of religion. When primitive man found himself at the mercy of elements and had no means of ascertaining how they worked, they made them into Gods and tried to appease them by prayer and sacrifice. These ideas and beliefs formed into religions and they flourished in the fertile soil of ignorance and superstition and in course of time there came a class of people, priests and men of religion, who wanted to serve their own interests by exploiting popular ignorance. Religion is now regarded as an enemy of science on which material progress of humanity depends. It is supposed to make men inactive and dependent on supernatural power. According to the communists religion is the opiate of the people. Some so-called progressive people would like to banish religion from their country.

Many people think that religion is the enemy of science. But, in its true analysis, both religion and science seek truths. So there can be no conflict between the two. In the dark ages religious teachers were enemies of science because they condemned any knowledge of the material world. But in modern times religious leaders do not try to check the growth of science. For example, Vivekananda never asked the Indians to become scorers of science. The spheres of religion and science are totally different ; so there can be no conflict between the two.

The Marxists look upon religion as an opiate rendering the common people as champions of inaction. But this is a wrong notion about religion. Superstitions associated with religion can make men dull and passive ; but no religion tends to make people oblivious of their duties towards the society and the country. The Gita contains the distilled essence of one of the greatest religions of the world. It is written in the form of a conversation between the great warrior Arjuna and Lord Krishna. In course of this conversation Lord Krishna advises Arjuna to behave like a 'Karmayogi'. The Gita asks men to be true to the kindred points of heaven and home ; and so does every true religion of the world.

Religion is a great force in the life of a nation. The highest hopes and the noblest aspirations of mankind lie enshrined in the great religions like Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. Religion can never be a bar to progress. In fact, true progress is not possible without religion. If religion is banished from a country, its progress would mean multiplication of the devices of material comfort. Perhaps progress of material civilization is possible without religion. But such progress cannot bring peace and happiness on earth. True progress of a country means all-round development of its citizens. Is all-round development of an individual or a nation possible in a God-forsaken world ? Religion is the source of moral and spiritual values. A man without moral and spiritual values leads the life of an animal. The finer products of the human brain—literature, sculpture, painting and music—derive nourishment from religion. The contribution of the Bible to the culture of

the Western nations is well-known. Every student of history knows how the ancient religious texts of India shaped Hindu civilization. The Islamic religion has united the Muslim nations together, and is mainly responsible for their progress.

From the above discussion we arrive at the conclusion that religion is not a bar to progress. (585 words)

83. Where science ends, philosophy begins. (WBCS '64)

We are all very proud of science. It has unfolded the mysteries of Nature and given us material comfort beyond the wildest dreams of our forefathers. Who could have thought, even a hundred years ago, that we could fly hundreds of miles with a supersonic speed or listen to voices from a distance of thousands of miles ? Who could foresee the enormous strides with which science is advancing towards an unknowable future in these days ? Distances are traversed almost in the twinkling of an eye gaps in nature are bridged with rare skill and ingenuity. Physical labour in our daily life has been reduced to a minimum ; hundreds of gadgets have been invented to provide material comforts and remove the terrors of excessive heat and cold. There is no gainsaying the fact that on the material side we are very much in debt to scientists and their achievements. But material comforts alone cannot bring happiness to man. If it had been so there would have been little distinction between man and the lower animals. The noblest of men, sages and philosophers, have, however, paid little attention to their physical comforts. They have held that the highest truths are inaccessible except from the vantage ground of poverty and physical destitution. This attitude of mind only emphasises that the knowledge that is of the highest importance in human life, knowledge of the relation between man and his surroundings, cannot be acquired from science. Even when science has made available all the material comforts that man needs for an easy life, the problem remains as to how he should conduct himself to his fellow men and in what relation he should place himself to his maker. Philosophers through the ages have insisted on the fact that the highest knowledge for a man is to know himself

and the highest perfection that he can hope to attain is obtained by control over his lower passions. Science is singularly incapable of helping him here. Far from assisting him in the conquest over his lower-self it only whets the appetite for care and pleasure and thus, in a manner, undermines his moral nature. The problem of human behaviour is as old as civilization. Great sages of our country as well as of other countries applied their mind to this problem and upheld that once this problem was solved to satisfaction, the world would be rid of many of the evils from which it suffers. This problem remains as unsolved today as it was in old days. And because it is still unsolved the world today is living under the shadow of a nuclear holocaust that threatens to exterminate it. Science, therefore, for all its triumphs, have not been able to offer any solution of this problem of human behaviour. It is only the philosophers who can help us here. Again admitting that journey to the moon and the planets will be an accomplished fact in the near future by the advent of science, will it throw any light upon the mystery of creation? How did the cosmos with its myriad worlds come into existence? What is the mystery of evolution of space? What is eternity? To all these questions science has no reply to make. We wait for the philosophers to supply the answer. (547 words)

84. Does the end Justify the means ? (WBCS '70)
Or, Ends and Means (WBCS '66)

We are often in a tearing hurry to reach our goal. Any means handy and effective seems to be good enough to serve our end. Immediate gain and hasty returns offer a rationale for any precipitate action. What is truly interesting about such a course of action is that a sort of moral justification is found for even any unethical activity. Sometimes the passion for self-aggrandizement, a very common characteristic of the material-minded people gets the upperhand and suppresses all scruples or qualms. Hence the emotional ardour for achieving the desired thing overrides all other feelings. Violence or intrigue or any slippery device can be a powerful weapon in the hand of a person who is determined to getting his objective.

Sometimes it is argued that violence can be an acceptable means for attaining lasting peace. This idea has gained currency among the votaries of revolution almost in all corners of the world. Hence cool analytical reasoning is fast yielding place to physical violence and fanaticism. Mahatma Gandhi refused to see eye to eye with this pernicious frenzy. Hence truth, unqualified and uncompromising, is what he valued more than anything else in the world. Even under the most compelling circumstances he stood firm like a rock and opposed all incitements to violence which wanted to do away with sanity and human reason. His conviction was that means were as important as the end.

Yet revolutions have taken place in different periods of human history. How could we deny the impact of these social or political upheavals? Without them the world's annals would have been written otherwise. Surely for a better deal and a welcome change did the great political thinkers sow the seeds of fiery revolution in France. However critically we choose to look at the Bolshevik revolution or even at the Chinese war of liberation, the violence they resorted to was definitely with an eye to bringing about a big change, with the avowed purpose of improving the lot of the common people. Does not the end, then justify the means?

But we have to think not only in terms of immediate gain but also in terms of the long-term achievement. We might flatter ourselves with the idea that even a saintly character of Mahabharata, pious Yudhisthir once gave the lie to serve a noble cause. Yet, he had to suffer at length for this unfortunate event. He was debarred from entering the heaven for this act of falsehood. So this indirectly proves that means are no less important than the end.

Occasionally, to reach our goal we choose to be oblivious of the nexus of the cause and effect. Whatever method a man adopts to reach glory or success, or whatever means a nation takes recourse to, in the final analyses the value of the thing achieved comes to lose its significance in the true perspective of changes and the evil means hardly seem justified even in the context of the better end.

'Ends and means are co-related. Good ends cannot be gained by bad means. On the other hand good means cannot lead to bad ends. Means must be fair, just and moral, otherwise the achievement has no meaning. Of course there are others who believe that if the end is just and noble there is no objection in having recourse to any means to achieve that end. In practice also we find that often success and laurels are achieved by many although the means adopted by them were not very fair and simple. It is therefore very difficult to give any final verdict on this issue. (600 words)

85. **Knowledge and Wisdom** (WBCS '67)

Or, 'Wisdom denotes the pursuing of the best ends by the best means' (IAS '68)

Several factors contribute to wisdom. Of these the most important one is a sense of proportion. What is meant by a sense of proportion is the capacity to take account of all the important factors in a problem and attach to it its due weight. In modern times owing to the complexity of the specialised knowledge required of various kinds of technicians this has become more difficult than it used to be. That is why it is often pointed out that although our age surpasses all previous ages in knowledge, there has been no corresponding increase in wisdom.

That wisdom in the sense of comprehensive vision is not necessarily present in specialists in the pursuit of knowledge is made clear by the example of those powerful scientists who have turned a disinterested pursuit of knowledge in the composition of the atom to the means of destroying the human race. Knowledge implies a pursuit of the unknown, of the unexplored. But only knowledge which is not much more than understanding of certain facts does not necessarily give us an integrated vision, an insight into the heart of things. Wisdom, on the other hand, does.

Comprehensiveness alone cannot constitute wisdom. According to Bertand Russell, "there must be also a certain awareness of the ends of human life." This awareness is, however, lacking even in men whose knowledge is wide and Russell

would not have them called wise. He writes, "Many eminent historians have done more harm than good because they viewed facts through the distorting medium of their own passions." Perhaps one could stretch the comprehensiveness that constitutes wisdom to include not only intellect but also feeling. It is by no means uncommon to find men whose knowledge is wide but whose feelings are narrow. Such men obviously lack what is called wisdom.

Knowledge separated from wisdom is not enough for emancipation from personal prejudice, because the essence of wisdom is emancipation. We are all subjected to egoism of our senses and we cannot help being so. Our senses are bound up with our own bodies and cannot be made impersonal. No one, as a matter of fact, can view the world with complete impartiality. However, it is possible to make a continual approach towards impartiality. And the only way of doing it is to acquire wisdom, that is to say, to acquire knowledge of things somewhat remote in space and time. "It is this approach towards impartiality" writes Russell, "that constitutes growth in wisdom"

Today we are learned but not wise. He who knows others is learned and he who knows himself is wise. Today intellectually we have advanced far but spiritually we have lagged far behind. Our confused knowledge is at the bottom of many problems. The kind of specialized knowledge which is required for various kinds of skill has little to do with wisdom. But knowledge separated from wisdom cannot be of abiding significance. Knowledge and morals should not be too much separated. Since even the best technicians should also be good citizens, knowledge should be supplemented by wisdom. With every increase of knowledge, wisdom becomes more essential. That is why Russell is right when he notes, "The world needs wisdom as it has never needed it before; and if knowledge continues to increase, the world will need wisdom in the future even more than it does now." (560 words)

86. Religion is the rule of life, not a casual incident in it
(WBCS '72)

If man could live by bread alone he would scarcely bother

about making life meaningful or worthliving. Since he wants *something more, something of which Vedic Hymns have spoken nearly three thousand years ago*, man is preoccupied with the feeling of wonder and awe at the mysteries of existence. Out of this awakening of the consciousness in man arises a sense of devotion to the ultimate and an yearning for a moral code of behaviour which sublimates animal instincts in him or keeps them under check. In fact, every religion tends to find a conflict between what man does and what, according to his sense of moral values, he ought to do. Once he recognises that he is part of the design of the creation of the Supreme, he finds kinship with his fellowmen and realises the importance of the ideal of selfless service and sacrifice, of the abiding significance of love, which religion provides as the cementing bond.

Yet 'religion' for the common man conjures up a set of rituals or events in his clock-bound life. Certain festivals bring home to him the meaning of belonging to a particular sect or faith. He conforms to some code of behaviour set down by the scriptures or man of religion, seldom trying to understand the underlying motive of these 'norms'. Though willy nilly he acts up to certain ethical codes, he is more engrossed in the superficial aspects of these events which appear to him more or less casually. Hence, religion does not mean for him any involvement in any ethical code of conduct for his own betterment in life. It appears very often as a collection of dogmas to the unthinking mind.

Today we are living in an age of science, often beset by our own materialistic designs and devices. The overpowering influence of material progress has thrown man almost off his feet. Impelled by his mounting urge for greater physical comfort he is rushing headlong to hazardous risks and adventures. This has once again brought man close to his vital problems of life. After all these endeavours, it hardly gives him his desired object or brings him any near his goal. Hence, in the most advanced countries of the world, youths have turned restless, and have sought an Elysium in the blighting darkness of dopes and drugs. These so-called 'hippies' are as much the victims of non-ethical living as those who profess to give modern

life a new orientation through scientific experiments. What they badly miss is religion—a code of life which links man with the very mysteries of existence and makes him aware of his own physical limitations. Nowhere has this problem received a better treatment than in T. S. Eliot's "*Waste Land*", in which the poet upholds the spiritual barrenness of modern times and the hollowness of the modern civilization and culture. Compared to this condition of the society, one may trace the boundless truth of human existence articulated by the Indian sages in the *Upanishads*. It was here, in India that religion truly became a way of life—the very rule of right living. Hence the message of religion, '*Datta, Damyata, Dayadhyam*'—give, restrain yourself and show sympathy to others—the everlasting rule of life that binds man to the eternal mystery of existence. Science in modern times explaining Nature has only removed false ideas of religion but by its inability to explain the basis of life it has only deepened the sense of the inscrutable mystery of existence. Happily the greatest minds of the present day, far from decrying religion, pay their respectful homage to it in this deeper sense.

(605 words)

87. The difference between Religion and Superstition

(WBCS '73, Misc '75)

Religion is the repository of mankind's highest aspirations and noblest ideals. It is a great life-giving force. No nation can survive without religion. Superstition is the product of folly and unreason. Superstitions grow in the darkness of ignorance.

Religion and superstition have some points of similarity. Religion is opposed to science. Superstition is also antagonistic to science. Religion is primarily concerned with supernatural beings like gods and angels. Superstition is concerned with supernatural creatures like witches and ghosts. Religion makes us God-fearing men. Superstition fills our minds with fear of evil spirits. A religious man observes certain rites and rituals. A superstitious man observes certain ceremonies. These similarities between religion and superstition help us understand why a religious man often shows his faith in superstitions.

However, the similarities between religion and superstition are superficial. Religion is a great spiritual force ; it ennobles our minds and sustains us even in our darkest days. Superstition has no such power. It makes us cowards. Superstitious men cannot achieve success in life because superstition breeds a defeatist mentality. Religion is a powerful liberating force ; it broadens our outlook. It teaches us to be tolerant and sympathetic towards our friends and neighbours. Superstition, on the other hand, makes us suspicious and narrow-minded. Religion sustains mankind in all ages. Even in an age of science people derive inspiration from religion. Science cannot destroy religion. Superstition flourishes only in dark ages. In the middle Ages most of the people were steeped in superstitions. A careful reading of Coleridge's 'Christabel' or Shaw's 'Saint Joan' shows how superstitions affected the minds of the people in the Middle Ages. Superstitions disappear in an age of reason. Science destroys superstitions. Now only the uneducated villagers believe in superstitions.

We are living in an age of science. Science has made our life easy and comfortable. But religion is not a spent force in this world. Religion has no conflict with our modern outlook. In fact, the increase of material pleasures has made us more religious. People of many western countries have recently turned to Hindu religion. In countries like America and Japan temples for Hindu gods are being established. Many worshippers of Lord Krishna have come from those countries to India. This clearly shows that religion plays an important role in modern life. Superstition, on the other hand, is a serious handicap in modern life. It prevents us from enjoying the gifts of science. In the villages of our country people suffer from deadly diseases because they refuse to get themselves vaccinated. The superstitious villagers start worshipping gods and goddesses when they suffer from an epidemic of small-pox or cholera.

Religions have well-defined teachings and dictums but superstitions are countless in their forms and beliefs. When something happens which he cannot account for rationally, he is led to believe in the existence of divinities or spirits

causing such happenings. Thus there is a common superstition that the number thirteen brings ill luck. The mass bathing on the occasion of an eclipse is nothing but a superstition. Any ill-happening in a family under certain circumstances in the past often breeds some superstitious rites to be followed by the members of that family. In this way superstitions also grow in number.

Religion is essentially different from superstition though the two have some superficial similarities. Superstition is a redundant sprout of the heavenly plant of religion. It may safely enough be cut off, without doing any harm to the parent stock or to the society; nay, perhaps till once it is lopped off, this goodly tree of religion can never grow in perfect health and vigour. (602 words)

88. True sympathy is more than a feeling (WBCS '76)

Feeling is a matter of subjective experience. Placed in a similar situation, two persons may have two different feelings. An adventure-film may please two friends, but there will be difference between their feelings of pleasure; a gruesome murder may sadden two neighbours, but there is apt to be a distinction between their feelings of sadness.

It should be remembered in this connexion that although feeling is supremely subjective, it is not totally unconcerned with matter. For, it is only when man has something to do with matter, that feelings are born. Besides, when feelings are the outcome of imagination of a certain person, the material world is more or less the basis of that imagination.

Feeling may be a kind of mental excitement. It may cause a kind of tension in body and soul. In anger and in fear, our whole frame seems to quiver. Then comes a magic change. We change colour and our hearts throb faster. There is eventually a disturbance in the state of our mental equilibrium.

Feelings are peripherally excited while emotions are centrally excited. Anger, fear etc are really marks of emotion which is but a kind of complex feeling. Emotion causes a sudden change in our inner world and expresses itself by making us act in various ways.

Indeed, change in the spiritual plane is one of the principal indications of the birth of emotion. Most of these changes are wrought by the powers transmitted through the medium of a self-propelled nervous system, which is connected with the face, the heart and the stomach. In a moment of tension, these parts, animated by the powers transmitted through that self-propelled nervous system, work in various ways. In the case of a tender emotion, para-sympathy starts working, resulting in slow heart-beat and low blood-pressure; in the case of an intense passion, on the other hand, sympathy flaps its wings, resulting in the heart beating fast and blood-pressure shooting up.

Sympathy thus is more than a mere feeling in case of which the person concerned has to remain passive. A person cannot create a feeling on his own accord. When sense-organ comes in contact with matter and causes sensation, feeling automatically is born, the person concerned has no say in this matter, has no power to control or regulate it. Sympathy, on the other hand, is in one's control and depends for its presence on a person's mental make-up.

Sympathy is an altruistic feeling. Etymologically it means feeling with i. e. pleasure at another's pleasure, pain at another's pain. To excite sympathy what is required is to mark the expression of another's feeling, to guess its underlying implication and feel in the same way. If I seek to feel sympathetic at another's bereavement, I shall have to mark his expressions, imaginatively and instinctively feel the depth of his sorrow and have a corresponding feeling roused in myself.

Sympathy thus is purely a conscious feeling. It is the outcome of a voluntary and a deliberate act. A man who has sensitivity, love and imagination and ability to observe with interest may have what is called sympathy while feeling is organic, involuntary and will rise in man, whether he intends or not. Further, feeling is simply an expression of reaction on one's mind on the sight or report of any happening, while sympathy represents some follow-up action to give him immediate relief or assistance to tide over the difficulty. In this sense also, true sympathy is of more value than simple outburst of feelings.

(582 words)

(f) **SOCIAL TOPICS**

89. **"The world does not progress, it only changes"**
(*WBCS '52, IAS '55*)

There is an oft-quoted line from Tennyson, which runs as follows—

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world !"

This upholds the optimistic view that the world is slowly but surely progressing towards a final consummation. Nothing is stationary in the universe and the time is irresistibly advancing with its new ideas to which one must yield or be swept away. In every age the old order yields to the new and a continuous struggle is going on between the die-hard conservatives and the progressive liberals. The liberals of one age are looked upon as the conservatives in the next. The innovations of today are the conventions of to-morrow. Ideas are constantly changing from age to age. The old patterns of morals, manners and customs, the out-worn systems of politics, economics and religion are changing shapes with the march of time. Any community which blindly sticks to conservatism and ancient ideas is sure to stagnate and rot. Human society is not a static institution. The wonderful discoveries of science have vested immense power in the hands of man and nothing remains unattainable or unconquerable. Man has dived into the depths of the sea and has reached the summit of Everest and has of late through innovation of science done the miracle of strolling on the moon as well. Of course, some think that the golden age has already passed away in some remote age and that plenty and happiness and the peace of mind enjoyed by our forefathers will not come back any more, yet change is inevitable ; and if we are to hold our ground in this world we must progress and outgrow the old order of things and enter into a new and a better order. It is true that all changes are not changes for the better. History shows that old ideas often revive after a lapse of time in the continuous process of changes and thus it appears

that there is room for much controversy as to whether the world is really progressing because of the changes.

(355 words)

90. "The old order changeth, yielding place to new"

(WBCS '50, Misc '68)

[See the Essay No. 89 and then add]

What is looked upon as a golden rule at one time or at one place ceases to be so at another. Change is the law of Nature. Not only do our bodies change but our thoughts, ideas and feelings also undergo change. This constant change is not only inevitable but beneficial also. Every new feature in the condition of our existence gives a new stimulus to human endeavour. Life on earth is subject to a process of change. If they did not change and make room for others, creation would have ceased long ago. As we adapt ourselves to different situations we allow others to fill in the vacuum. So in a cyclic order life constantly changes rejecting the old and accepting the new. The change is so essential and so inevitable that without it life would have been only a sordid thing, devoid of any charm or loveliness.

(505 words)

91. "The golden age which a blind tradition has hitherto placed in the Past is Before us" (WBCS '53)

There is no nation, race, creed or religion where the idea of the Golden Age does not exist. The most civilized and the most backward nations are one in this respect ; they equally conceive of a period of their history when, compared with their present state, they were happier and better. The Hindus have it equally with the Chirtians, the Christians with the Mohammedans and the like. The Hindus speak of their *Satya-yuga*, the Christians of their Millennium ; the Muslims look back to their period of ascendancy, when the crescent ruled over a good portion of the world and when they had their empires in the East as well as in the West, in Asia as well as in Europe.

Since the idea of a better period is so widely prevalent all over the world, there must be something inherent in the human

constitution, something inseparable from human nature that will account for this idea. The desire for happiness is deeply rooted in all sentient beings, but when they have attained the thing they desired, they find that they are as unsatisfied as ever. The eternal search for happiness goes on unabated for ever, only the old wants give place to new ones. The Vedantists say that the search for external happiness is foolish, for happiness can be experienced by extinguishing all desires, while others assert that satiation of all desires will bring happiness.

If real beauty and joy, fullness of peace and true well-being belong to the Self of man it is yet to be realized in the heart. The Golden Age cannot thus be placed in the past, and so it is hoped will come at some distant future :

Hope springs eternal in the human breast
Man never is but always to be blest. (Pope)

Unlike some dreamers who love to imagine that the golden age lay in the past and the world is receding further and further from it to meet its doom, poets like Shelley look forward to a golden age in some remote future – the millennium. The golden age of the world, according to him, is the age of perfect freedom through love and faith, through pursuit of beauty and innocent joy, through peace and well-being. This ideal condition of human society is what is called the millennium. Christians look to the millennium, the thousand years of peace and prosperity, when Christ will again reign on this earth with his saints and the apostles. According to the Hindus, the Iron Age (present *Kali-yuga*) will be replaced by the Golden Age (*Satya-yuga*).

The idea of the Golden Age is a negative idea rather than a positive one. It is conceived to be a period of time when men will be free from disease and poverty, from oppression and tyranny, from sufferings and troubles, from untimely and unnatural deaths, from sin and sorrow—in short, a period when there will be no evil, and when all will be happy.

The modern scientists think that the progress in science has lessened many evils, rooted out many diseases and with the further progress of science, the evils will be further lessened.

They believe that the world is continually progressing, that we are better than the ancients, and that men of the future ages *will be better than us.*

The Golden Age will be brought into this world by living a life of righteousness, by making a return to nature, by practising self-sacrifice and other good virtues and by broadening our vision of life. (583 words)

92. Tradition

(WBCS '59)

In the process of evolution man has developed through many stages both biologically and intellectually. From primitive times down to the present age the changes have been particularly conspicuous in the social aspects of man. The primitive man was more or less an automation, acting as his compeers would act, but with the dawn of civilization, as the individuals merged into families and communities, certain rules of conduct automatically evolved. These rules were based on habits, rites, customs and practices and various principles and doctrines handed down from fathers to sons, from ancestors to posterity. This is what may be termed 'tradition'. Man is essentially a social being. Need of mutual help and protection binds the individuals together in groups and communities and tradition plays an important role in shaping and defining man's social behaviour.

There is another meaning of tradition, which is akin to what may be called oral report passing from mouth to mouth. In this sense tradition is synonymous to hearsay or rumour. In the wider accepted connotation of the term, tradition is custom, rite, habit, report etc. delivered by people to their successors from age to age.

Tradition is not to be confused with convention or usage. A convention may not necessarily have its birth from by-gone practices and may be limited by place and time. It may have its day and cease to be with changes of environment and circumstances.

Conventions grow up from long and extensive practices which may differ among persons and peoples. But tradition is primarily the outcome of certain fundamental aspects of human

nature, which little vary from man to man and from society to society.

Traditionalism is most marked among human societies in the earlier stages of their development. But with the advancement of civilization and widening of the bounds of knowledge and experience, traditions have in many instances adjusted themselves to the changing conditions. A country like India with a hoary past is proud of her glorious traditions, but to have her rightful place in the comity of nations she must keep abreast of the times and reconcile traditions to the present needs. What was good and useful a century ago, may not be so in the present day world.

Tradition has often the sanction of religion and tends to crystallize into prejudice. Immoral and inhuman rites and customs are sometimes adhered to in the name of tradition. Traditionalism sustained by blind orthodoxy or conservatism creates a great handicap to all progress. In an age of dynamism a society which is static with age-old traditions without adaptability to circumstances is bound to stagnate to be wiped out in course of time. Admiration for the past is a good thing, but it should have limitations. The sanctity of the past lies in its experiences which act as stepping-stones to human progress in civilization, liberty and knowledge.

Change is life, stagnation tends to death. We are an old nation with a long and glorious past. While we feel proud of what we were, we must work in the living present to achieve greater glories, inspired by the tradition our forbears have left us as their priceless legacy. In estimating the value of tradition one has to bear in mind the memorable words of the poet :

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,

And God fulfils himself in many ways,

Lest one good custom should corrupt the world !"

(565 words) . (Tennyson)

93. How far should traditions be maintained in modern society ? (WBCS '76, IAS75)

Tradition signifies various habits, rites, customs, practices and doctrines handed down from fathers to sons, from

ancestors to posterity. It stands for anything, a belief or a practice, that has continuously developed over the ages. These beliefs and practices that have acquired both prestige and a halo around them are difficult to discard, even in a modern society. What we mean by tradition involves all these habitual actions, habits and customs, from the most significant religious rite to our conventional way of greeting a stranger. It involves a good deal which can be called *taboo*. We become conscious of these items, or conscious of their importance, usually only after they have begun to fall into disuse.

We are always in danger, in clinging to an old tradition, or attempting to re-establish one, of confusing the vital and the inessential, the real and the sentimental. An Englishman, for instance, is traditionally apprehensive of number 13 anywhere, while putting up in a hotel or getting ready for a journey ; a Bengalee habitually dislikes and dreads a call from the rear, not to speak of a thousand other things. While offering the excuse in the name of tradition, we rarely seek to find out the reason behind certain prohibitions ; we are just carried away, indeed we rather like to be carried away, by our sentimental attachment almost to everything that has the touch of the past.

A blind and dogmatic observance of tradition is a great impediment to modernism. Happily a slight change in attitude is now discerned. The authority of tradition in a modern society is in the process of waning ; the young have learnt to subject everything to the acid test of reason and commonsense. That is good, for a blind or timid adherence to the old tradition should positively be discouraged.

It is thus not of advantage to us to indulge a sentimental attitude towards the past. For one thing, in even the best living tradition, there is always a mixture of good and bad, and much that deserves criticism. Nor can we safely, without very critical examination, adopt a few dogmatic notions, for what is a healthy belief at one time may, unless it is one of the few fundamental things, be a pernicious prejudice at another. Nor should we cling to traditions as a way of asserting our superiority over less favoured peoples. What we can do is to use our minds, remembering that a tradition without intelligence

is **not** worth having, to discover what is the best life for us, *not as a political abstraction but as a particular people in a particular place.*

We have to judge ourselves which of the past traditions is worth preserving and which should be rejected, especially in the context of the modern society we live in.

We should not, however, assume that all ancient beliefs and doctrines are bad and ill-founded simply because they are old. Tradition does not mean simply some out-dated practice and customs ; it has also a positive side. We have to adjust those traditions to the changed conditions in a modern society by accepting the best of our traditions, cultural and other, along with the main features of modernism. The modern tendency to hanker after materialism needs to be discouraged and the ancient belief in spiritualism and truth needs to be revived. Thus we have to combine the positive aspects of both tradition and modernity and abandon the negative aspects which tend to drag humanity back to the age of darkness.

(583 words)

94. Your conception of the Good Life (CL '51)

No two ideas of good life are likely to agree with each other because of the difference in the angle of vision from which life is seen by different persons each being governed by his own tastes, ideals and circumstances. What is morally good may not always be legally good and similarly what is a good life to a poor man may not be so to a rich man. For obvious reasons, teachers, doctors, engineers, politicians and people in the other walks of life have all their own individual ideas of good life. But whatever disparity may appear in the individual conception of good life, it will be generally agreed that a good life should not be such as dedicated solely to the acquisition of wealth to the utter neglect of the mental and moral qualities inborn in a man, and at the same time it is certain that it cannot thrive in utter poverty, which is apt to demoralise and depress a man.

To be great one requires excellence in one or more of one's qualities but to lead a good life one requires the cultivation

and harmonious development of whatever finer qualities one has, although they may not reveal any exceptional feature. Thus it is within the reach of most people, if not all, to try and *achieve the salutary principles of good life within their respective spheres of activity.* There will be no cause of conflict if everybody strives for peace and prosperity and all that makes life worth living, inspired by the sober ideals of good life.

In this world of struggle and strife where men constantly vie with each other for power and affluence, good life is always under the threat of being duped or overpowered and with the neglect of the canons of good life, the chronic unhappiness sets its root deep in human mind. One who can stand the acid test of troubles, tribulations and temptations by one's indomitable spirit and ceaseless perseverance, is sure to reach the goal of good life. Uprightness and dutifulness, sympathetic heart and unblemished character are the fundamental characteristics of good life. A man leading a good life enjoys love and confidence of others besides an enviable peace of mind in all circumstances.

To an ordinary man fortune hardly appears to be bountiful and the world is a great workhouse where he has to sweat to earn his bread. But whatever be his calling or profession, even if that be the routine-bound works of a clerk in an atmosphere not often suited to his taste and temperament, his life can be moulded as an ideal good life by rising above the petty affairs of everyday life and cultivating and integrating the findings of life, apart from the unflinching devotion to honesty and dutifulness in his daily toil. (469 words)

95.

Service before Self

(WBCS '55)

If we take a lofty view of life, it will appear that worldly pleasures and interests are not the be-all and end-all of human existence. Man is born selfish; behind most human actions there is primarily the idea of pleasing one's self. Fame and reward are, in most cases, things for which man strives and struggles. But, however, selfish a man may be, he is found to forego various amenities for the service of his family or his near and dear ones. Thus the instinct for self-denial or for service before self is ingrained in every human heart, which, if carefully

nursed like a sprouting seed, will in time grow up into a mighty tree with luxuriant foliage spreading its blissful shade far and wide. A strong sense of duty, human sympathy, love and piety, inspire feelings of self-sacrifice. There is a perpetual conflict in man between these virtues and his instinct of self-interest. Heredity, education and environment sway the human mind one way or the other.

Service means rendering help to others with the object of doing good. Love is the strongest incentive to service and sympathy is its main spring. Furtherance of self-interest and service to others hardly go hand in hand. Patriotism or love for one's own country kindles hope and spirit of sacrifice against all violence and oppression and the patriots often vow to serve the people and the country before self.

Service can be both individual and collective. To save a man from drowning, to render first aid to an injured person, to console a man in his bereavement are some of the numerous ways in which one can render personal service. In times of flood, famine, epidemic and sudden outbreak of fire, bands of people can come forward to help the distressed. Virtue in all these cases is its own reward. Self has to be subordinated to service if the latter is to be of any worth. Love of humanity and truth was the cause of the glorious service rendered by Mahatma Gandhi throughout his life till martyrdom. Service before self is the greatest lesson of his life. Self-less work is one of the greatest teachings of the Gita. Behind all crowning human achievements recorded in history, there is surrender of the self. Selfless service ennobles the soul while selfishness degrades it. To serve others is to love others and doing the will of God. As one of our own poets has said in a well-known verse, we have not come to the world to worry about ourselves; all of us are here for all others and each one of us is so. The great teaching of Swami Vivekananda was also the practice of service to others by every individual. Such selfless service of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan, Netaji Subhas Chandra, Shyamaprasad and others has made them immortal in the minds of the countrymen.

In domestic, social, political and spiritual spheres an amount

of self-denial is of paramount importance. It holds together the complex elements in a family or a society. Independence of our country after centuries of foreign domination has been possible through sufferings and sacrifices of selfless patriots. To identify oneself with the larger life of the community and the country, one should subordinate his own interests to those of others ; and this is the most outstanding virtue which true education can impart to a man. This spirit of service before self if properly cultivated will bring peace on earth and goodwill to men. (579 words)

96. Folk art in Bengal (WBCS '68, CL '56)

Or, Folk arts in India (IAS '74)

By folk art we generally understand music, painting and crafts which spontaneously develop among uncultured people in a country, specially in the rural areas. Folk art is usually handed down from generation to generation and has an exclusive feature of its own. National independence has turned the eyes of the people to national art and culture and attempts are being made to revive folk art and craft of Bengal, much of which has been lost or has deteriorated through lack of facility and encouragement

Out of the community feeling a rich tradition of folk art has grown up in rural Bengal. It has been built up slowly over years by the homely interest of the common people in creative arts. Often delicate pieces of workmanship and exquisite works of art have been created by rural people with very commonplace objects for example, the art of 'Masalanda mats' of Midnapore, the impressive art of 'Patas' of 24 Parganas and of Midnapore, the decorative art of 'Alpana' of Santiniketan patronized by great artist like Abanindranath, the clay-modelling of Krishnagar and the terracotta art, have all contributed to the repository of impressive folk art in Bengal.

The exquisite 'Patas' of Kalighat illustrating some mythical stories have inspired the imagination of foreign visitors, and the art of 'alpana' has often impressed them by its imaginative designs. The clay-modelling of Krishnagar has few parallels in the annals of folk art. Sometimes it can even beat the works of sculpture.

What is truly the most impressive form of folk art in Bengal is its folk songs and literature. Of the innumerable types of folk songs in rural India, Bengal has possibly the richest storehouse. On the riverways of East Bengal (which is now in Bangladesh) the soft-wailing note of 'Bhatiali' songs spreads a subtle charm on the people. It has a tremendous influence on the minds of rural people. In the month of Bhadra when boat races are held in East Bengal the 'sari' songs are sung by the participants. To-day, even on the rivers of West Bengal the homesick boatswain of East Bengal are heard to sing these songs. In the heart of the city, one can sometimes listen to the 'Bhatiali' songs sung by great artistes, almost reproducing the intimate tone of these songs. The 'Baul' songs of West Bengal have a melancholy note of their own which touches the inmost core of the heart. Several other types of folk songs, i. e. 'Tarza,' 'Santhali,' 'jhumur,' 'Patua' and 'Bhadu' songs can be heard in various parts of Bengal. They awaken a flood of emotions which soothe the tired nerves of people living in the city. However weak is our link with the village life in the urban setting, deep down in our hearts there is an under-current of love for folksongs which replenishes our being. Apart from these folk songs there are a few ballads which record the intimate details of the heroic story of the villagers, their sorrows and sufferings. Of these the ballads of Mymensingh (now in Bangladesh) which saw the light of day at the initiative of Dr Dinesh Sen have been denuded of their original simplicity and charm since their publication. Folk dances of West Bengal like jhumur, baul and the dance story of 'mahua' create a very serene atmosphere in the minds of the audience.

Another very significant type of folk art in Bengal is the puppet-dance which is employed in the rural areas to narrate some mythical stories. Indeed, in the very scheme of the puppet dance, in which so many dolls are pulled by the strings, there is an underlying philosophy of life : that we are all like toys pulled by the strings of fate. In the interest of the community and emotinal integration folk art in West Bengal should receive our fond care and attention. (638 words)

97. **Folk Tales of Bengal** (WBCS '68)
Or, Indian folk-tales (IAS'63)

Before the impact of Western ideas was felt in this country and our literature began to take shape, the folk tales used to fill the place of novels and short stories of to-day. They had a wider appeal because one did not have to be educated to get pleasure out of them. The old grand-mother of the family used to regale her grand-children by telling them stories and sometimes in the evening elderly village people crowded round the headman or the wiseman of the village to hear him recite these tales. The first impact of Western ideas made the educated people sophisticated and they came to regard these stories as childish and undeserving of serious attention. But now fortunately the tide has turned and educated public opinion has come to look them as a rich treasure house of the wisdom of the past and affording a clue to the thought-currents that flowed through this ancient land of ours. It is not difficult to realise that these stories enshrined the aspirations of the people of the past and stimulated their imagination to a degree in conditions and circumstances quite different from today.

These folk tales of Bengal can be divided into a number of types. A few of them were frankly imaginative. These were the stories of the Bengama and Bengami or of the prince who risked his life in the fight with terrible monsters and ultimately won as his prize the fair princess who had been held a prisoner beyond the dense forest or the sea by the Rakshasas so long. They stimulated a spirit of adventure in the listener who wanted to exhibit the prince's prowess and win possibly a similar prize. In the constricted life of villages of the past these stories of adventure must have brought in the breath of wider world with far-flung horizons. A second type of stories which might have some basis in reality was about robbers whom no force could resist but who, like Robin Hood of England, gave away in charities to the poor whatever they used to take away from the rich. These stories were symbolical of the popular discontent with economic disparity in social life

and pointed to the need for a just distribution of the wealth of the country. The ghost stories had also some place in these folk literature. In this modern age of science, these stories of ghosts and rakshasas being outmoded are rapidly *disappearing*. Yet another class of stories dealt with the gods and goddesses and bore unmistakable evidence of the deep emotional nature of the average Bengalee. He likes to think of the gods and goddesses as his own children or relations, of Krishna as the son of a village milkman with thousand and one frolics, of Parvati as a typical village maiden who at a certain time of the year visits her mother's house, and of Kali, the dreaded goddess, as a loving daughter who helps her poor father in various ways. Thus these folk tales give glimpses of Bengalee life in the past and from them we come to know how our forefathers thought and felt in the by-gone days. (528 words)

98. **Legends, folk-lore and mythology** (WBCS '74)

Literature is the finest expression of man's creative imagination. Creative imagination is not a special attribute of civilized man only. In fact, men in primitive ages were more imaginative than modern men. Their imagination found expression in legends, folk-lore and mythology. Legends, folk-lore and myths may be truly described as the unwritten literature of the ancient world. Legends, folklores and myths were not made for the people, but they were made by the people.

The myths and legends of the earliest civilization have entered the stream of consciousness of men and women through the ages, affecting their literature and art, and even their ways of thinking. Interwoven with the religious myths were a host of legends, traditional stories, which though not authentic, had like tales of Troy, a substratum of fact. There were also all kinds of fables and anecdotes, folk-tales, allegories and romances which fused with the myths and legends to make a fascinating complex of stories. Folk-lore concerns itself with the mental and spiritual life of the people both civilized and primitive—as expressed in the traditional beliefs, customs, institutions and sayings that have been handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth.

Every country has its legends, folk-lore and mythology.

But in ancient times these forms of unwritten literature flourished in Greece, Rome and India. The primitive people of these countries created innumerable legends, folk-tales and myths. Legends, folk-lore and myths of the ancient Greeks lie enshrined in their great epics the *'Iliad'* and the *'Odyssey'*. The *'Ramayana'* and the *'Mahabharata'* contain the beautiful legends, folk-lore and myths of the ancient Indians.

Legends, folk-lore and myths of the ancient ages have considerably enriched literatures of modern times. English literature has derived raw materials from the legends, folk-lore and myths of England, Ireland, Scotland, Greece and Rome. Many ancient legends fed the imagination of Chaucer, the first great English poet. Shakespeare's most poignant tragedy *'King Lear'* is based on the story of a legendary king and his three daughters. Milton's *'Paradise Lost'*, Shelley's *'Prometheus Unbound'* and Keats's *'Hyperion'* owe much of their charm to the classical legends and myths. Legends and myths of Greece fascinated the English romantic poets. Shelley and Keats were deeply influenced by the beautiful myths of ancient Greece. Their poems are littered with allusions to Greek-mythology. Similarly, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* supplied thousands of stories and episodes on which were based innumerable literary productions.

Folk-lore fired the imagination of Sir Walter Scott, the greatest historical novelist of Europe. Irish folk-lore played an important part in the writings of W. B. Yeats. His *'Stolen Child'* finely shows how folk-lore enrich poetry.

Legends, folk-lore and mythology of a country give us a clear idea about its culture and civilization. Moral and spiritual values of a people lie enshrined in their legends, folk-lore and myths. For example, the Arthurian legends remind us of some moral values cherished by the ancestors of the English people. Our ideals, spiritual and moral values are derived from legends and myths of our country. Many people in our country are uneducated. But they absorb wisdom from the legends and myths of our country.

Living in the present age of anxiety, sophistication and mechanised civilization, we should not forget legends, folk-

lores and myths. These products of the primitive mind are the literature of the people, the voice of the multitude and a reservoir of primal human emotions. They will remain a living force in our literature and civilization in the ages to come. (582 words)

99. **Indian outlook on life and its manifestation in social and political institutions** (WBCS '51)

Indians take the philosophical view of life and consider it as unreal and worldly and unlike the West attach no great importance on the full enjoyment of this material life. Motives of profit and acquisitiveness, which are rampant in the West, are not so manifest in India, rather plain living and high thinking was the predominant ideal of this country. Here the good and the wise are respected and admired more than the rich. The great prophets and teachers of mankind have in all ages upheld the immortality of the human soul. The brief span of this life on earth is only a sojourn in the soul's glorious career through eternity. The Indians have always harped on the principle of unity amidst the variety of life and occupation. Indians do not look down upon any kind of profession or trade; and everybody of whatever calling or position may attain perfection provided he strives to lead an honest and pure life. India is the land of toleration and the supreme toleration is manifest in the life and character of the Indians. The old unsophisticated outlook on life is undergoing some changes due to Western influence and the progress of science and industrialization.

The impact of European civilization revived the dormant intellectual and critical impulse and paved the way for new spirit of the age. The Indian social life, which was so long based on religion and tradition and the philosophical ideas of life, began to change colour with the march of time. The caste system and the doctrine of untouchability which had its sway over this land for a long time had its natural decay. The womanhood of India is now enjoying equal opportunities with men and is emancipated from the social bondage of the past. The present trend is for social disintegration. The social life is

passing through a transition from the agricultural to industrial outlook. Mass illiteracy still remains a die-hard obstacle in the progress of social upliftment.

The policy of secularism has been adopted in the Indian Constitution and the religion has been kept completely outside the political sphere. In this land of superstition and religion, this is obviously a bold enterprise. In foreign policy, India uphold the doctrine of toleration and neutrality. The spirit of freedom from foreign domination seethed in the hearts of the Indian youths who welcomed immense sufferings and sacrifices for about a century, which culminated in the actual liberation of India. India for her wider political outlook and spiritual philosophy has been able to secure international fame and confidence.

(426 words)

100. Man and Society (WBCS '58, IAS '60)

A man has a dual responsibility,—one with which he is born, that is his solitary being, and the other which he develops through contact with others or his social being. As an individual he is primarily concerned with himself and his near and dear ones, and as a unit of society he has to depend on his fellowmen around him and to share their joys and sorrows. Individually a man is more or less isolated, instinctively following the bent innate in his nature. The natural human instincts are modified by social relationship and undergo changes through varying environments and behaviour. The society serves in so many ways that the dependence of the individual upon society cannot be avoided. The abstract concept 'society' means to the individual human being the sum-total of his direct and indirect relations to his contemporaries and to all the people of earlier generations. The individual is able to think, feel, strive and work by himself ; but he depends so much upon society—in his physical, intellectual and emotional existence—that it is impossible to think of him, or to understand him, outside the framework of society. It is 'society' which provides man with food, clothing, a home, the tools of work, language, and the forms and contents of thought. Thus

the relationship of the individual to society is very deep and it cannot be severed.

A man is born egoist and his inherited nature is unalterable. But social contact and tradition influence his nature, which in course of time determines his relationship to society. Even though a man has to depend more and more on his fellows, his increasing self-consciousness contributes to the growth of a sense of discontent rendering him incapable of realising the full extent of the benefits he derives as a social being. Inordinate individualism is a fundamental cause of the critical times through which the world is passing today. The solution of the acute problems with which humanity is faced now, rests on better relation between the individual and the society. Man has to be more and more conscious about his indebtedness to his fellows and the duties he thus owes to society. Not one's self alone, but a measure of selflessness must actuate man to devote himself to common good to redeem himself and the society to which he belongs. This alone can bring about a happy compromise between excessive individualism and broad social outlook. (406 words)

101. The main currents of twentieth century thought

(WBCS '64, IAS '67)

The twentieth century is, in many respects, an antithesis to the nineteenth. The latter was an age of concentration and exclusiveness. Authority and power were held by the few to the exclusion of the many. But we are living in an age of expansion when the trends are towards universality. In the nineteenth century technically advanced nations tried to exploit weaker nations and enriched themselves. In the narrower sphere of individual human lives, those who had means and resources used them freely to exploit those who were without these advantages. The sense of the dignity of human life had not yet fully dawned upon the horizon of human consciousness. The common man was no more than an instrument to be employed for the benefit of those who were more favourably placed. It was the age of *laissez faire* when people with means asked for a free hand to exploit those in the lower rung of the

social ladder. But with the dawn of the twentieth century, the common man refused to be a mere tool in the hands of the propertied class. He claimed the right to live his own life with dignity and with his proper share of material comforts. The emergence of the common man is a distinguishing mark of this age. It is the guiding spirit of such movements as Socialism and Communism that cut across national barriers. *It is hastening the ends colonialism; it has also led to the formation of super-national organisations like the League of Nations or the United Nations charged with the sacred duty of looking after the rights of backward nations and protecting them from the usurpation of more advanced ones. If man is the same everywhere he must have the same right to the gifts showered upon the earth by its creator. No one has the right to deprive him of those gifts by force or by fraud. In recent years we have seen peoples in Asia and Africa, held in bondage over long stretches of time steadily emerging into the light of freedom.*

The same tendency away from exclusiveness is also seen in the field of literature. Formerly literature was thought to reflect selected phases of life to the exclusion of all others. These latter were considered unworthy of the writer's attention either because they were without significance or because they were thought to be too crude or indelicate. But modern twentieth century literature seeks to give representation to diverse phases of human experience including even the humblest and the meanest because the modern critical opinion is that every experience, however insignificant or crude, has a value of its own and helps to light up some obscure nook of the human mind. Literacy has spread among the common people. Superstition and religious fanaticism have declined to a great extent. In the domain of science and technology the desire to find out the secrets of nature with a view to add to human comforts and exhibit human skill and ingenuity continues to find forceful expression in various epoch-making inventions. Man is no longer earth-bound. He is now trying to explore the outer space with a view to settle in the moon and reach other planets of the sun. Man has already harnessed immense power through the discovery of nuclear energy. (550 words)

102.

Our Changing World

(CL '64)

Points : Physical changes—political changes—changes in economic life—changes brought about by scientific discovery—social changes—manners, customs, family life, class relations—changes in moral values—conclusion.

We live in a changing world. In some cases, these changes are rapid and can be easily perceived ; in some other cases they *take place very slowly and gradually and are not easily realised*. Among these latter are the physical or geological changes that have occurred on the earth's surface. It is a well-known fact that the surface of the earth is undergoing a steady change so that what is solid land today, may, in course of the ages, be changed into a stretch of water or the sea-water may recede and throw up solid land ; in some places the earth rolls up into hilly ridges and in some other places the hills submerge into sunken valley. A great part of northern India was once under sea-water but now it is a long stretch of fertile land. Rivers change their courses with the passing of time and thus bring about significant changes on the surface of the earth.

In political and economic life also, there are occasional changes conditioned by man's desire for a better and fuller life. Not long ago monarchy was the order of the day ; each country was ruled by a king whose will was law and whose favour or frown could shape the country's destiny. But the despotism of monarchy has now been replaced almost everywhere by democracy in some form or other. It is now felt that democracy can achieve the greatest good for the greatest number. In the economic sphere also, capitalism and *laissez faire* (State's non-interference in trade and commerce), which were common in the nineteenth century, have now been widely discarded in favour of socialism and planned economy.

The discoveries of scientists have changed the face of the world as also man's outlook on life. Inventions of locomotives and aeroplanes, electricity and atomic energy, radio and rockets, medicine and surgery, and missiles and sputniks have radically altered man's mode of living and his conception about the universe. He has already stepped on the moon and is now

thinking of visiting the other planets of the sun. Scientific discoveries are showing new marvels every day.

Social life has also undergone thorough changes with the progress of time. The superstitions that clogged human progress are rapidly giving way to a broader and more liberal outlook. The different parts of the world have now been brought closer ; the class-hatred, the system of untouchability and the antiquated ideas have disappeared in modern world. *There are changes in dress, diet and family life and old customs are being rapidly discarded in favour of more enlightened ones.* The standards of morality have been low in the modern world. The regard for the wisdom, the respect to the elders and the devotion to the religion have also declined in modern times.

Along with innumerable amenities and advantages brought in by these changes, the modern world has to face certain evils and abuses, namely distrust and insincerity, artificiality and want of sympathy, poverty and unemployment and a wider contrast of the rich and the poor. (502 words)

108 **Cultural Domination** (WBCS '51, IAS '58)

Cultural domination was an off-shoot or outcome of colonial domination. Perhaps the only exception to this rule is to be found in the history of Rome and Greece. The Greeks were supplanted by the Romans, but the Romans could not dominate Greece in the sphere of culture. There the captives outdid the captors. Apart from this singular exception nowhere do we find that cultural domination was possible without colonial domination. Bengal carried her culture to Borneo and Sumatra and to the islands lying in the east, in the wake of her colonial expansion. The British brought the Western culture to India in the same way. Julius Caesar carried the Roman culture to the island of the Britons. Indeed, in the past cultural domination was possible in the wake of colonial expansion.

The greatest contribution to the world culture lay in religious upheaval. The Indians have kept up the flame of religion burning throughout the ages. Thus in times of need, she gave birth to Buddhism which bounded the diverse

migrating races into a common brotherhood. She evolved the Vedantic view of life and thus upheld the universal religion. Rabindranath's philosophy, based on the Upanishads and internationalism, made him a world figure.

Of late, we find a perceptible change in the sphere of cultural sway. Man's mental horizon, being under that what it was a century ago, can embrace the culture of a nation and be wholly imbued with it, even though the latter is not a colonial power. There is no denying the fact that Russian culture is predominant in most of the nations of the world.

By cultural domination, we mean the assimilation of those outstanding ideas and thoughts for which a superior nation stands. A nation superior in cultural sphere, diffuses certain ideas and thoughts which an inferior nation thinks them worth possessing.

But to be dominated by the culture of a foreign nation cannot always be an unmixed blessing, because those ideas and thoughts for which a nation stands superior, may not be suitable to another nation and there the blind imitation may bring in disaster in its cultural life. Hence, the assimilation of culture contains within it the note of warning to those nations which blindly strive for novelty and innovations.

And yet in this assimilation of what is best and what is most congenial for adoption, lies the glorious prospect of future "One World", which Wilkie has foreshadowed. It is more by the intermingling and interfusion of varied kinds of culture rather than by the threatening of atom bombs that the happy and peaceful world can be attained. (433 words)

104. Cultural activities in villages (Misc '72)

The villages of our country are centres of agricultural activities. The villagers spend most of their time and energy on agricultural activities. In their spare time they cultivate the fine arts. However, their cultural activities become pronounced during certain periods of the year.

The cultural activities of the villagers of India are generally associated with religious festivals. The worship of Goddess Durga is associated with various cultural activities in the

villages. Before this grand festival the villagers become busy making rehearsals of their jatra plays. The village musicians, dancers and actors make the best use of their talents at this time. On the days of worship the villagers assemble at the place of worship and enjoy the jatra plays. The jatra performance is the most important cultural activity in the villages.

In most of the villages of India fairs are held in winter and spring. On the last day of the month of Pous the 'Pous Mela' is held in villages. The village artistes try their best to entertain their friends and neighbours on this occasion. The villagers engage themselves spontaneously in cultural activities because Pous is the month of mellow fruitfulness. In Spring fairs popularly known as 'Charak Melas' are held in the villages. The 'Charak Melas' are very attractive because they show the athletic and cultural activities of the villagers.

Now-a-days cultural activities in villages have lost much of their spontaneity because of economic depression. The abolition of Zamindari system has given a death blow to cultural activities in villages. The landlords were patrons of fine arts in the good old days. Now the village artistes have no patrons. So their cultural activities have been considerably curbed. Under these circumstances the Government should render financial assistance to the village artistes so that they may engage themselves freely in developing cultural activities.

(300 words)

105. The problem of beggars in towns and cities-

(Misc '72)

In the towns and cities of our country we find beggars of all ages. Every public thoroughfare, the steps of every hotel, the gates of every temple, are all infested with beggars. We just look at them and pass on, or soothe our moral sense by doing a little act of charity. The foreigners who visit our country are surprised to find beggars picking food from dustbins.

The beggars who are found in towns and cities of India are of two types. Some of the beggars are able-bodied persons. They demand alms in the name of religion. There is another class of beggars who are disabled or diseased. These unfortun-

nate men beg for their living ; but in many cases they are forced to beg on behalf of a band of the most cruel and hard-hearted employers who make capital out of their misfortune.

The beggars are sources of many social evils. The able-bodied beggars are lazy fellows. They are often noisy and troublesome. Some of these beggars are thieves and swindlers. The diseased beggars are very often a social menace ; they spread contagion.

In Western countries like England there are vagrancy laws that make begging by the able-bodied a punishable crime. In Russia men who are rendered unfit for work become a charge on the State which looks after them in homes maintained for the purpose. In most of the advanced countries the problem of beggars does not exist at all since it is the duty of the State to find employment for all.

In our country the Government has adopted measures to mitigate the sufferings of beggars. In some towns and cities vagrant homes have been set up. The disabled beggars find shelter in the vagrant homes. But the religious mendicants should be compelled to earn their living by honest labour.

(303 words)

106. The Cinema as a portrait of life (WBCS '73)

The cinema is one of the most valuable gifts of science. Nowadays, people of all countries enjoy cinema show. In every town there are cinema houses. The film industry is a major industry in countries like America and India. In India the film industry has very large investments and it attracts the big financiers to produce some popular films of their own. A film show is the cheapest and most popular form of amusement. It appeals to all sections of the people.

The cinema is a major industry and is the source of income for many people ; but we must not forget that it is an art. The cinema is a growing art, and it is likely to acquire features yet unknown to us. It is an improvement on the theatre. Modern technology has perfected its imitation of life.

The cinema being an art, it gives a portrait of life. It portrays life in three ways. A film based on historical events gives

a picture of past life. For example, 'A Tale of Two Cities' gives a picture of life during the French Revolution. Some films present a realistic picture of modern life. For example, 'Calcutta-71' depicts the picture of life in West Bengal in recent time. Again a film may present a fantastic picture of life. Thus 'Gupi Gayen and Bagha Bayen' gives a fantastic picture of life. Films are generally based on wellknown dramas, novels and stories. However, the directors make additions and alteration to suit their plans. Sometimes reputed men of letters are engaged to edit films. Thus Christopher Fry, a famous dramatist of the present century, writes film-scripts. An imaginative director who has a fine sense of art can make a good film. In our country Satyajit Roy is famous for making artistic films. Some of his films have been highly praised in many foreign countries. The unique charm of a Roy film lies in the quality of life that it seeks to dramatise. Roy's films give true pictures of Indian life filtered through his imagination.

Unfortunately, most of the films produced in America and India do not conform to the standards of Roy's films. The majority of the directors are guided by commercial motives. They emphasise the entertainment value of cinema. For this purpose they introduce many scenes of dance and music. In most cases film-songs and dances have a strong sexual element. For example, the film 'America by Night' is simply a series of lewd dances. In recent American films we find a tendency to attach undue importance to crime. In fact these films are based on sex and crime. Films produced in Bombay blindly imitate the popular American films. Now the question arises : Is life like this ? Every one will admit that life depicted in the popular American or Indian films is not the life we lead. Sex and crime do not play so important a role in our life as they are shown to do in these films. These films give only melodramatic pictures of life.

The cinema is the most popular form of amusement in the modern age. It has great influence on the minds of its patrons. So directors should try to combine entertainment and instruction in films. The cinema should faithfully depict our life. Like other arts, it should enhance our joy of life. The film that

reproduces the life and living of a true character in its natural setting and the rise and fall in their life with human feelings and emotions is sure to evoke the necessary response in the hearts of the spectators. (598 words)

107. *The effects of the cinema on the young* (Misc '75)

The cinema is one of the most precious gifts of modern science. It is the cheapest and most popular mode of entertainment for people at all levels of society. At the same time it has immense educative value. If properly conducted, it can teach literature, philosophy, sociology, history, economics and patriotism. That is because pictorial representations are far more interesting and impressive than oral or book instruction. In our country, however, the box-office value of a picture is sometimes given greater weight than its educative value. The lure of monetary profit induces both producers and distributors to bid good-bye to art, morality and canons of decency and decorum. They introduce glamorous and exotic or outlandish Western style in Indian pictures.

The influence of the cinema on our daily life is almost all-pervading. It captures the imagination of every young man and woman. The cinema dialogues are echoed in their talks and the movements and styles or fashions of film stars are imitated by them. Most of the films today, in particular the Hindi cinema, feature alluring vamps eager to expose their feminine charms and scenes of drunkenness and violence with a view to exciting the sexual and violent instincts of young cinema-goers. The scenes often excite the base cravings of young minds and seek to awaken the animal instincts in man. The juvenile or young delinquents coming from poor environments are amazed to see on the screen in fabulous Hindi films a world of beautiful homes, changing fashions, pretty girls, colourful bars and cabarets, indomitable smugglers, bank-dacoity and an abundance of money and it is no wonder if they are tempted to get easy money through foul measures and anti-social activities.

The cinema can serve a really useful purpose when it will remain aware of its relation to life and morality and is not led astray by any reactionary motive. (310 words)

**108. Should social service be made compulsory
for students ?** (Misc '74)

Students receive education in schools and colleges so that *they may become worthy members of the society*. Education broadens the mind and makes us rise above petty self-interests. Education will become meaningless if it makes us residents of an ivory tower. So students should be encouraged to serve the society in their spare time.

Now the question arises : Should social service be made compulsory for students ? Some educationists argue that students should be concerned with their studies only. They think that students will not be able to prepare their lessons perfectly if they are required to devote some time and energy to social service. But such ideas about education are not acceptable to modern educationists. Modern educationists are in favour of making social service compulsory for students.

Knowledge gathered from books is valuable because the noble ideas of great thinkers lie enshrined in them. But book-knowledge is not enough. Students should gather practical experience of life through social service. When a flood rises or a fire or epidemic breaks out or a famine or riot rages, the student community does the greatest service to the society. In imparting adult education or in beautifying the city, their voluntary services are of immense value. Education makes students enthusiastic about social welfare. Students should look upon social service as a sacred task.

Participation in the National Cadet Corps (NCC) was so far compulsory for all male university students in the first and second year of the degree courses. It has been decided that two alternative schemes should be developed, viz. National Service Corps (NSC) and National Sports Organisation (NSO) in order that students may be able to undertake activities in which they are interested. We hope that through this National Service Scheme, the social service will be made compulsory for students in the near future and that will be beneficial both for the students and for the country as a whole.

(315 words)

109. Dress and food habits of people in Bengal

(Misc '74)

India is a vast country, and it is the homeland of diverse races of people with different tastes and food-habits varying from one State to another. The Bengalees form a class by themselves. Thus their dress and food habits have practically *nothing in common with those who live in other States of India*. The people of Bengal are very luxurious and artistic in their dress and food habits.

The traditional dress of a Bengalee gentleman consists of a 'dhoti' and a 'punjabi'. Women of Bengal use 'sarees' and they wear them in their own way. Men and women of Bengal are ease-loving, so they are in favour of loose garments. The people of Bengal use fine clothes. They are very artistic in their tastes; and so they prefer beautiful designs in dress. The 'saree' of the Bengalee women is famous throughout the world. Social life has undergone thorough changes with the progress of time. The old traditional dress is now being modernized with a trouser and a bush-shirt or a pyjama and a punjabi as a popular dress for the males.

As regards their food habits, the Bengalees belong to the rice-eating community. In recent times many Bengalees have taken to wheat products on account of the acute scarcity of rice. The Bengalees are very fond of fish but not so much in respect of meat. The Bengalees are also very fond of various vegetable preparations. A Bengalee woman spends much time in the kitchen to prepare various items of food. Of course now-a-days in a modern Bengalee family the cooking is being simplified with some selected vegetable and fish items. Milk and fruits are used by the well-to-do families. The Bengalees are also very fond of sweetmeats, especially 'Rasogolla' and varieties of 'Sandesh'.

Dress and food habits of the Bengalees easily differentiate them from the people of other States. (310 words)

110. The importance of discipline in social life

(Misc '75)

In the dim dawn of human history, the need of society was realised when men felt that the law of the jungle no longer

appealed to them and that a life of orderliness and obedience, a life of love, peace and co-operation would be more rewarding. Discipline, therefore, has its birth in man's wish for happiness.

In a family, the parents, the children, brothers and sisters and even the servants—all have their allotted duties to perform and the family boat sails on smoothly in all weather if each of them discharges his responsibility. The same thing is true to the society.

Discipline is indispensable for men of every age and at every station in life. It is indispensable at home, in academic life, in the playground, in society, in public life, in the army and police, in fact everywhere. Without law and discipline amongst the people, the society will be thrown into utter confusion. If its individual members are permitted to do whatever they like, society will break up and the onward march of civilization and progress will be arrested. Discipline does not mean iron rule. It means willing compliance with a code of conduct prescribed by the superior wisdom for the common good. Its purpose is to see that liberty does not degenerate into licence. Breach of discipline leads to anti-social activities and the liberty of the community itself may be endangered. Discipline is not slavery or loss of freedom. It means order and regularity, leading to success and happiness. There must be someone everywhere to lead the way—father in the family, boss in the office, Headmaster in the school and so on. The presence of the leader steadies the course of discipline and ensures a smooth working of the machinery.

If therefore people gladly and ungrudgingly cultivate this habit, the society to which they belong, would turn to be an ideal society. (316 words)

(g) ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL TOPICS

111. The Indian Agricultural Problem (CL '50)

India is one of the leading agricultural countries in the world and one of the biggest sources of her wealth is her produce from land. India is primarily an agricultural country

and 69.5 p.c. of the total working population depends on agriculture for its livelihood. Agriculture accounts for about 50 p. c. of the national income and about 99.5 m. people are engaged in cultivation. Out of the total cultivable area of 480 m. acres in India, about 390 m. acres are now under cultivation.

Her varied climate and soil conditions make possible to raise all varieties of agricultural products in India. Crops of India are usually classified as follows—(i) Food Crops such as rice, wheat, barley, millets pulse, sugarcane and spices ; (ii) Oilseeds such as linseed, mustard, castor, groundnut, coconut etc. ; (iii) Fibres such as cotton, jute, hemp, flax etc. ; and (iv) Drugs and Beverages such as poppy, cinchona, tobacco, tea and coffee. India ranks first in the world in the production of groundnuts and tea and enjoys a virtual monopoly in the production of lac. It is the second largest producer of rice, jute, raw sugar, rape seeds, sesamum and castor seeds. But still compared with other civilized countries of the world, Indian Agriculture is in its infancy. The backwardness of Indian agriculture is reflected in the extremely low yields of the cultivated land. Out of the world's total annual production of 33 cr. metric tons of wheat in 1968-69, Russia (with a population of 23 crores) produced 9.62 cr. metric tons, U.S.A. (19.5 cr. pop) 4.27 cr. m. ton, China (70 cr. pop.) 3.13 cr. m. ton and India (52.7 cr. pop.) produced only 1.86 cr. m. ton. If we compare the average yield of wheat per hectare (= 2.47 acres), we find that while Holland produces 150 Bushel (1 Bushel = 27 Kg. approx.) per hectare, Denmark 138 Bushel, U. K. 104 Bushel, France 65 Bushel, Italy 60 Bushel, India produces only 27 Bushel per hectare. In respect of rice, China produces 3610 kg. per hectare, but India raises only 1500 kg. per hectare.

This backwardness of the Indian agriculture can be accounted for as due to natural, human and technical causes, some of which are—monsoons and the ill-distributed or heavy rainfalls in some parts or other of the country together with floods, fragmentation of land, insufficient manuring and reduced fertility of the soil, extreme poverty and illiteracy of the agriculturists,

antiquated methods of cultivation, poor health of cattle and labour and want of capital and organisation. Thus agricultural problems in India are of a fundamental character which can be remedied only by the combined efforts of the people and the Government.

The difficulties due to uncertainty of rain can be obviated by adopting various types of irrigational measures such as lift or well-irrigation, tank-irrigation, canal irrigation (inundation canal, perennial canal and storage canal), tubewells and pumping plants. Subdivision and fragmentation of holdings is a serious evil in India and is due to increasing pressure on land with the increase of population. Land reforms and proper distribution of agricultural land can solve this problem. The fertility of the soil can be increased by proper and scientific manuring and rotation of crops. Better and increased yields can be obtained by supply of improved types of seeds and plants. The condition of cultivators can be improved by mass education, improved sanitation and preventive measures against cholera and other fell epidemic diseases. The other drawbacks of heavy indebtedness to the mahajans can be mitigated by the establishment of Co-operative Credit Societies and extension of Government loans. For securing a better price to the cultivators, Co-operative sale societies need also be organised.

With a view to attain Food self-sufficiency in India, both Central and State Governments are now trying their utmost to improve the general condition of agriculture in India and have, therefore, undertaken some big multipurpose irrigation projects and innumerable minor irrigation projects, reclamation of lands, hiring out of tractors, various agricultural researches, and establishment of seed multiplication farms. There is no doubt that with the improvement of agriculture if the yield per hectare of all kinds of crops can be brought up to the level of the civilized countries, there will be a great economic renaissance and India will again revive her affluence and prosperity. (670 words)

112. The problems of the Indian villages and their solution (CL '52, '63)

The Indian villages, which were at one time the seats of

joys and plenty, are now fraught with miseries, abject poverty, illiteracy and superstitions. The problems of water-supply (both for drinking and agricultural purposes), drainage, sanitation, spread of epidemic diseases (like small-pox, cholera, etc.), absence of schools, doctors and hospitals and heavy death tolls have greatly affected the progress of villages. People are indifferent to health and hygiene and education. Want of transport facilities and defective means of communication specially during the rains, when the non-metalled roads are muddy and impassable, affect the spirit of interdependence among different villages which is keenly felt in times of famine or failure of crops. The division of labour based on caste prejudices is not yet extinct in rural areas. There the market for commodities is narrow and the economies of large-scale production are wanting. Jealousy, quarrel and absence of co-operation among villagers add to their miseries. Most of the villages have been abandoned by the rich and well-to-do people leaving behind only the poor villagers to rot there helplessly.

The solution to these problems lies in all round improvement of the villages by the establishment of cottage industries and handicrafts and by collective farming, and spread of free and compulsory primary education in rural areas together with adult education through literary centres, libraries, recreation clubs etc. Sanitation by clearing of jungles and filling of ditches, sinking of tubewells and ring-wells, construction of metalled roads, and opening of dispensaries, health centres and maternity homes, establishment of co-operative banks and co-operative credit societies are essential for restoring the old prosperity of our villages. The doctors and well-to-do people should be induced to resettle there. With the betterment of economic condition, the spirit of co-operation among villagers will revive and the villages will tend to be self-sufficient units.

The question of rural uplift in India loomed large before the public and the government and some progress has been lachieved in this respect by the operation of rural development programmes. A very comprehensive plan, viz. All-India rural-cum-urban Community Development Programme, as devised

by the Planning Commission, was inaugurated by Government with effect from Oct. 2, 1952.

The Community Development Project is undoubtedly a step in the right direction if the villages have to be revitalised. Its aim is to rouse a sense of self-reliance in the villagers and make them feel an interest in the improvement of their own villages. Electricity is, without doubts, a boon to modern civilization and is essential for raising the standard of rural life. This fact is increasingly realised and an earnest attempt is being made by Government and State Electricity Boards in all States to extend power to interiors of rural areas. In future the villages will no longer suffer from an atmosphere of gloom and depression that over-spreads them now. By the help of electricity they will be in a position to start small scale industries and thus supplement their meagre income from agriculture. All this will help to improve the standard of village life considerably. Improved means of communication between the villages and neighbouring towns will also help to improve village life. Good roads are being built at a rapid rate so that the days of isolation of our villages are fast coming to an end. In future villagers are sure to get all the amenities of town-life at their door step. They will cease to be regarded as on a lower level than people dwelling in towns and cities.

(585 words)

118. Life in a West Bengal Village today (WBCS '69)

A West Bengal village is no longer that serene habitation far away from the ignoble strife of the city. Connected by bus or railways it is always conversant with the day to day developments in the city. Though the hubbub of politics does not mar the peaceful tenor of its everyday life, its inhabitants are aware of the recent changes in the field of politics. The network of health centres in various parts of the country has rid them of some of the epidemics and the seasonal diseases. Education is no longer a neglected thing. Even multipurpose schools have been set up for the sons of the soil in the very heart of the village.

Such a village is Usthi, about thirty-five miles from Calcutta

and six miles from Diamond Harbour. About $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the station Deuli it lies on the Calcutta-Diamond Harbour route. A pucca road connects it with the village. Cycle rickshaws are easily available for reaching the interior of the village. A bus route runs through it to Diamond Harbour. On 'hat' days (Wednesday and Saturday) streams of people flock to the village for paddy and molasses. There is also a local market for everyday transactions. What makes the place so picturesque is the presence of two canals around the village. There is a school meant for both boys and girls. It has recently been upgraded to higher secondary stage. A post office and a sub-registry office have greatly relieved the people of worries and anxieties. The presence of the Block Development Office has substantially improved the prospects of the village. The village peasants grow paddy and vegetables throughout the year. There are some office-goers who rush to Calcutta everyday by train.

Life in this village is more or less peaceful. Whatever disputes arise in the locality are tackled by the Panchyat. The presence of the police outpost considerably helps maintain the law and order. Of course, the traditional family ties and loyalties are still there to enforce a sense of discipline among the people.

Living close to nature and the rugged soil the people of the village are painstaking and enterprising. Fishing is a pleasant pastime. Local football tournaments and other games keep the people there busy in their leisure hours. Cultural activities are occasionally organized by students of the multipurpose school which prove to be a great attraction to them. There is a big Library and Reading Room which cater to the needs of the local public. There is a gymnasium for the students and a theatrical club for the elders. Usually they stage a play during the pujas. A number of pujas are held every year and there is a healthy rivalry among different groups organising these pujas. The immersion ceremony is held with great pomp and grandeur. The village is still in a backward state in respect of lighting arrangement. The State Electricity Board is likely to extend its lines there in their next extension programme. The

tubewells sunk there being inadequate villagers still depend on the shallow tanks which is very unhygienic. There is, however, no student unrest or gheraos or bundh menace in this village. In a word, there is still peace of mind and the life in the village Usthi is pleasant enough to its inhabitants.

(547 words)

114. Urbanization in West Bengal (WBCS '61)

In Western countries there is very little difference between a town and a village except in size. The amenities enjoyed by town-people are also available to villagers. The extension of electricity on a massive scale has turned the villages into miniature towns. The invention of radio and television has further reduced the gap between the two ways of living. All this has lessened the attraction of towns and many people now prefer to settle down in the less congested villages where they can breathe the purer air than in towns and have more space to move about.

The Government of India also realised the futility of looking for rapid progress in the absence of planned urbanization of the villages. Throughout the British rule the villages were left in a wretched condition. The result was that people of means refused to live in rural conditions and left the villages *en masse*. No scheme of development is likely to succeed where a great majority of people are doomed to live under sub-human conditions, deprived of the essentials of modern life.

The Government of West Bengal, taking their cue from the Center, have embarked on a programme of urbanization. The idea is to bring the amenities of city life within reach of the villagers. Electrical energy is being progressively extended to more and more villages in West Bengal. This will not only help to remove the air of gloom and despondency, characteristic of village life, it will also supply the villagers with energy necessary for starting industries on a small scale and will be a source of profitable employment. It will obviate the necessity of periodical exodus to towns and factories in search of employment and enable the people to live throughout the year in their home environment. The State Government

have also blue-printed an ambitious health scheme for the villages. There will be a health centre for every small group of three or four villages with a properly equipped hospital. The centres will be manned by qualified medical men who will be induced to live in the villages with proper subsidies. Education also occupies an important place in the scheme. There is provision not only for primary and secondary education but also for higher education in rural surroundings. Already a number of colleges has been started in the villages. In order to provide teachers for these schools the Government have decided to start teachers' training institutions at different levels to be located in village surroundings. A net-work of metalled and unmetalled roads in villages has now simplified the means of communications. Life without recreation is very much like a burden. For this purpose, the Folk Entertainment Section is scheduled to visit the villages occasionally and arrange for the staging of dramas and exhibition of screenplays. The extension of electricity will also enable cinema houses to be started at suitable intervals. A radio centre is proposed to be started at every village where people may congregate in the evening and pass sometime in profit and recreation. It is expected that the moribund villages of Bengal will be revitalized when the scheme goes into full operation. (520 words)

115. The modernisation of rural areas (WBCS '76)

India is a country living in villages, but the influx to urban areas in search of employment is steadily increasing. Reorganisation of the rural economy through a programme of industrialisation has therefore become an urgent need. Prime Minister Sm. Indira Gandhi's 20-point Economic Programme sought to improve the conditions of the rural population by grant of moratorium on recovery of loans from landless labourers, small farmers and artisans, distribution of essential goods and distribution of surplus lands among the needy.

To save the villages was Gandhiji's dream; to modernize them is our duty. To bring smile in all rural lips by providing the so-called rustics with the amenities we enjoy in towns, will be our real achievement. The first step towards this modernisation will be to bring electricity to every cottage. Electricity will

remove the depressing darkness of rural evenings. An illuminated night will mean an extension of the day and hence more work, more pleasure, greater prosperity and brighter future for the villages in particular and the nation in general. Let us hope our hydro-electric multipurpose schemes—Bhakra Nangal, Damodar Valley, Hirakud, Tungabhadra etc.—will soon carry electric power to all the corners of remote villages and thus fulfil our cherished dream of self-reliant villages.

The next step towards the improvement of rural areas is to allow them a more prosperous economy. And this can be made possible by doing away with the traditional machinery for farming and irrigation. Additional energy inputs for the operation of irrigation pumps and in the form of fertilizers are the essential key to tapping vast unexploited food-production potential. The recent shifts in emphasis by the World Bank and other development agencies to give greater attention to small farms and rural development are an important step in the right direction. For, the small-farm progress can help improve income-distribution patterns, reduce unemployment, check the swelling flow of people from the countryside to the cities. Also, by spreading the benefits of economic progress among the poorest groups, it can create a social environment that greatly increases the motivation to limit family size. All of this will give the villages a new look and the villagers a new taste of happiness.

There should be development of rural leadership so that a scientific approach could be made to agriculture. This alone would transform the sector and increase output. There was no harm if people from villages came to towns to educate themselves. But they should go back and use their knowledge for rural development. Integrated rural development can be broadly classified as integration in a co-ordinating agency of the work of integrated agricultural development, integrated rural industries development and integrated labour and employment development. There have to be complementary services of credit and service institutions, marketing systems and consumer goods distribution agencies.

But the modernisation or urbanisation would not be

completed if we just remain wistful. We ourselves are to be more up and doing. Roads must be constructed there, wells must be sunk. Education and sanitation facilities must not be denied to them. Good schools and colleges, both for boys and girls, and even some co-educational institutions must be set up. Doctors must go to replace the quacks; medicines must be abundantly available and hospitals and health-centres must be built to minister to the needs of the sick and the wounded.

If all this can be done, if this determined war can be waged against the demons of poverty, ignorance and disease, only then can the rural areas wear a broad smile and enjoy the fruits of modernisation. (585 words

116. "Back to the village" (WBCS '75

A large majority of the people in India live in the villages. Their number was very much larger in the past but even now they outnumber the town-dwellers. In the past the villages were prosperous but in course of time the towns having various amenities and sources of earning especially with the growth of industrialization, attracted the talented and enterprising people away from the villages. The result was that the villages lost health and prosperity and became the shelter of ill-fed, undernourished, illiterate masses.

After independence it was rightly realised by the leaders that without improvement of the villages the country could not prosper. If village perishes, India perishes. There was no harm if people from villages came to towns to educate themselves. But they should go back and use their knowledge for rural development. The development of rural leadership is necessary by the application of scientific approaches to agriculture. 75 p.c. of Indians lived in villages and they should continue to live there. The educated young people should not think that working on a farm was beneath their dignity. Any activity which would boost production and improve health and sanitation, was worth doing well.

The agriculture should be a nation's first concern, particularly a nation like India. Efforts to increase the agricultural output through supply of irrigated water, good

seeds, fertilizers, improved techniques and use of power had borne fruit. During the last 25 years the production has doubled itself. If the cottage industry and co-operatives can be well-developed, the villages would be revitalized and the villagers will have a sense of self-reliance. The problems of rural unemployment and under-employment would be eased. Improved means of communication between the villages and the neighbouring towns will also help to improve village life. If the villagers get all the amenities of town-life at their doorstep, they would not like to throng amidst the hubbub of a town.

(315 words)

117. The problem of industrialisation in India (CL '51)

India is primarily an agricultural country and the dependence of the majority of the population on agriculture for subsistence has resulted in an excessive pressure on land, low per capita income of the people and a chronic unemployment. All these evils can be remedied by an economic salvation of India through planned industrialisation. India is rich in almost all the minerals and natural resources required for modern industries and has thus an ample scope for a full fledged industrialisation. India has already made some progress in the field of industries, such as iron and steel, coal, jute, textiles, paper, chemicals, tea, sugar, cement, matches etc., though she is still much deficient in the manufacture of tools and machinery, non-ferrous metals, heavy chemicals, automobiles and tractors, prime movers and electricals. On the whole, the industrial backwardness of India is gradually decreasing and she has now a place amongst the leading industrial countries in respect of her volume and variety of output, though the industrial progress here is not yet commensurate with the great possibilities due to her vast area, population and resources. The last Great War opened up new opportunities for industrial development by shrinkage of imports and widening of foreign markets, while Independence of India has given a great stimulus by opening up new avenues of industries and extending more assistance, financial and otherwise, from the Central and State Governments for the purpose. The development schemes

undertaken by the Government of India include the Fertilizer Factory at Sindri, the Machine Tool Factory at Bangalore, the Penicillin and Paludrine Factory at Poona and the Locomotive Factory at Chittaranjan. In recent years even such industries as automobile production, aeroplane making and ship building etc. have been started. There is still ample scope for enamel industry, glass, heavy chemicals, rubber goods and stationery articles. The production of electric motors and fans, aluminium, bicycles, tyres and tubes, copper conductors, receivers etc. are also in progress.

Though the necessity of industrialisation is now universally admitted, yet the want of sufficient technicians and skilled labours, absence of industry-mindedness and shyness of capital stand on the way of its marked progress. There are innumerable cottage industries such as husking of paddy and pulses, grinding of wheat and other cereals, oil pressing, gur and sugar making, cotton ginning and spinning, sericulture, toymaking, paper-making, metal, leather and ceramic industries etc. which can well be developed as subsidiary occupations for the agriculturists and also as supplement to big industries. Our industrialisation will be complete when our country will be self-sufficient in respect of her own requirements and the produce will be of such a good quality and less cost as to capture the foreign markets as well.

According to the industrial policy of Government as outlined on April 30, 1956, 17 key industries—such as arms and ammunitions and allied defence equipments; atomic energy; iron and steel; heavy plant and machinery required for iron and steel manufacture, for mining and other basic industries; heavy electrical plants; coal and lignite; mineral oils; mining of iron, manganese, chrome, gypsum, sulphur, gold and diamond, copper, lead, zinc, tin and wolfram; minerals; air-transport; railway; shipbuilding; telephone cables; telegraph and wireless apparatus; generation and distribution of electricity—will be the exclusive responsibility of the State. 12 other industries (minor minerals; aluminium and non-ferrous metals; machine-tools; ferro-alloys and tool-steels; chemical industries; antibiotics and essential drugs; fertilizers; synthetic rubber;

carbonization of coal ; chemical pulp ; road transport and sea transport) will be progressively State-owned. The remainder will be left to private Sector. Several Industrial Estates have been set up where private individuals can use the machineries for production of their goods.

As to financing of industries, in addition to Industrial Finance Corporation, a number of investment or development Corporations has been set up with direct or indirect participation by the Government. Loans from the World Bank and Foreign Capital are also available for development and establishment of certain big industries in this country.

If the present rate of progress and development of industries continue, India is sure to have an industrial renaissance in no distant future which will lead her to the long-cherished prosperity she deserves. (685 words)

118. Rationalization of Industry (WBCS '60)

Rationalization is an industrial term which implies the process of effecting efficiency in productive industries by eliminating waste, either of efforts or of materials, and by forming them into large combines with a view to meeting competition. It means an all-round scheme to reduce production cost and improve quality by the standardization of materials and products and the adoption, on an extensive scale, of modern plants, machinery and method of production and the elimination of uneconomic units. Rationalization thus aims at smooth and harmonious working of industries and better output, but it threatens labour displacement and is closely associated with unemployment. India, as a Welfare State, will have to pursue an economic policy, the fundamental aim of which should be the avoidance of unemployment or under-employment through the maintenance of useful employment opportunities for those able and willing to work. Thus the immediate implementation of the schemes of rationalization on a wider scale will be inconsistent with the above economic policy and is bound to generate social discontent to a large extent.

Industrialism is the outstanding feature of the world today. It is making tremendous strides in every civilized country. It

envisages production of goods in works and factories on a large scale, substituting the older system of producing goods by manual labour by men in their homes or in small workshops. Substitution of steam and electrical energy for hand labour has practically revolutionized industrial production. The safeguards to facilitate the progress of rationalization are standardization of work loads and working conditions, stopping new hiring so that displaced workers can be absorbed, maintaining workers during a re-training period for other jobs and sharing the gains from rationalization with workers affected.

Industries which produce goods primarily for export are best suited for rationalization as the export industries in this case have to face competition from industries of other countries. Rationalization has been markedly effective in respect of iron and steel work, cotton textile and jute industries and the like. Since numerous new and hard problems have emerged between labour and capital, it has become necessary to strike a balance between the two. Trade-unionism has played an effective role in this direction. The unions organize strikes in order to force employers to concede their demands, while the employers resort to lock-outs to resist them. This trial of strength between capital and labour has developed into class war and the situation thus created has helped the propagation of communistic doctrines in various countries. Governments in democratic countries have endeavoured to safeguard the interests of labour by passing various measures like factory acts, workmen's compensation acts and compulsory insurance laws. Efforts are being made to mitigate, as far as possible, the growing evils of class-war.

The primary object of rationalization of industry is to facilitate smooth and increased production through industrial peace. For this purpose a spirit of co-operation between labour and capital is of imperative necessity. Various methods are suggested and tried in order to achieve this purpose. Collective negotiation between the trade-unions and the employers is the most effective means of solution of disputes. When prices rise, there must be a proportionate rise in the wages of the workers and different welfare measures have to be taken to ameliorate

the living condition of workers and other people. It is evident that in a tussle between labour and capital, the latter has the advantage. This is why steps have to be taken to protect the interest of labour by means of enactments and certain other measures.

In view of the present unemployment situation, the whole issue of rationalization must be approached with humane consideration and the measures adopted by the Government must be labour-intensive and not labour-saving, that is, the rationalization in industry in this country should be introduced in a very slow and gradual process. (633 words)

119. Rise in the standard of life and its implications

(WBCS '51)

The term "standard of life" has two distinct meanings. In the strict technical sense, standard of life means the scale of living which the average individual of any given group considers preferable to marriage and settlement in life. In the loose and general sense it means merely the list of things which the average individual of any given class happens to be consuming at a given time and place, but this description of the way of life is of little economic value. In the technical sense, it is a vital factor in determining the density of population, the labour supply, the rate of wages and the possibility of future improvement of economic conditions. Those, who do not like to marry until they earn a decent income so as to afford a great many luxuries as well as necessities of life, are said to have a high standard of living. Provision for adequate education of children or possession of a motor car or high bank balance or insurance Policies may also add to the high standard of living. Thus a standard of living is always a relative term and consists of the number of desirable things which the individual prefers to the domestic satisfactions which come with marriage. A high standard of living may result either from a weakening of sex and domesticity or from a strengthening of the desire for other things, while a low standard may result either from exaggerated sexual and domestic desires or from weakened desires for other things.

The standard of living of workers plays the same part in determining wages as the cost of producing a commodity plays in determining its price. Standard of living has a vital influence upon the economic well-being of nations and of classes within a nation. If the standard of living of every individual of a group or society is high, there is a definite check against territorial over-population or occupational congestion. Such a country, in the absence of immigration would never have any more people than it could afford, and naturally there would be no want or starvation and the country would be prosperous. Consequent to the high standard of living, there appear late marriage among men and women and a tendency of birth control and artificial restrictions to avoid over population. It is responsible for the creation of new wants and their satisfaction through the all round development of industries. Rise in the standard of living is inter-related with the progress of a country. The difference in the standard of living in the urban and rural areas are well manifest. India now suffers from over-population and extreme poverty and to ameliorate her condition, all efforts have to be made towards improvement of our standard of life. (457 words)

120. **Rise in the cost of living and its consequences**
(*Misc '67*)

Rise in the cost of living always has its consequences some of which are very important. The cost of living rises with the advancement of material progress of a country. As more things are available for man's comfort and luxury, naturally there is a perceptible rise in the cost of living. And the rise in the cost of living which is an inevitable result of the rise in the standard of living also leads to various consequences in its turn which are mostly detrimental to the fixed-income group.

Although the rise in the cost of living is the result of a rise in the standard of living it paradoxically leads to poverty and consequent fall in the standard of living of a particular group of people. Income does not generally increase with the rise in the cost of living. Naturally, with the rise in the cost of living people become poorer and poorer. The purchasing

power of the money decreases. Most people cannot any longer afford any luxury and the standard of living falls.

The fall in the standard of living has many socio-economic consequences. Since rise in the cost of living means accumulation of money by a few people, there is wide-spread discontentment. The larger section of the society becomes poor and there is inevitably a feeling of disillusionment. Poverty leads to dirt and disease. Efficiency also suffers a good deal. Since there is always a feeling among the workers that the money for their work would not be any more sufficient to buy the things they need even for daily use they refuse to put in their best. The standard of business falls and even the rich and affluent group are affected and the country's economy is hard hit.

The cost of living naturally rises more as there is a fall in the production resulting from the fall in the business. And the whole society is caught up in a whirligig. The rise in the cost of living again is detrimental to society inasmuch as it contributes to the growth of anti-social elements. The sense of frustration mainly accounts for the growth of anti-social activities. Especially among the low-income groups there is a growing sense of anger against the injustice of the affluent section. Rise in the price of articles again leads to a tendency of hoarding and profiteering and black-marketing and supply of adulterated or spurious articles, thus leading to all-round corruption and vices. There is affluence of ill-got money in the hands of some while the majority of the people are subjected to immense hardship.

Growing poverty leads the labourers to demand more wages which the employers cannot grant in view of the falling standard of business and the rising cost of living. The result is that the labourers are on strike for days together inviting thereby more poverty on them. The employers also sometimes retaliate by declaring lock-outs and thus compelling the labourers to surrender. Various political parties also take advantage of this growing sense of dissatisfaction among the people by inciting them against the ruling party and urging them to take part in anti-government activities. All attempts are made to paralyse the government and the innocent people

are subjected to much harassment in addition to their being economically overburdened. (545 words)

121. Family Planning in India (WBCS '65, '70)
or, Family planning among different classes in society
 (WBCS '75)

Family planning is another name for birth control. Nowadays a planned family means a household which contains only two or three children. Population of the world is increasing rapidly, but earth's natural resources are decreasing gradually. So a problem arises : How will the teeming population of the world find food and other necessities of life in the years to come ? In spite of the spectacular achievements of science in food production and other spheres scientists have not been able to solve this problem. So the only solution seems to lie in family planning. Governments of all countries have adopted family planning as an important programme to tackle food problem and other economic maladies.

India is an under-developed but over-populated country. So there is chronic food scarcity in this country. The standards of living of common man in India are lower than those of many industrially developed countries of the world. Most of the Indian women live miserable lives. They enjoy very few opportunities in their lives. Opportunities for employment are limited in India ; so the problem of un-employment has assumed alarming proportions in recent times. In order to tackle all these problems our government has given top priority to family planning. The red triangle, the symbol of family planning, can be found even in the remotest corner of this vast country.

People belonging to upper classes of society have adopted western standards of living. They have various sources of pleasure and amusement. Life is a game to them. They frequently visit theatre houses and cinema halls, and enjoy cabaret shows in big hotels. So they do not have to find recreation in procreation. In most cases these people have small families. The family planning programme has been wholly successful among the rich people of India.

The middle class people of India have been hard hit by the economic problems which have raised their ugly heads in recent times. For example, in every middle class family there is at least one unemployed young man. Educated girls of a middle class family do not easily find husbands or jobs in these hard times. So they become an oppressive burden to the male earning members of the family. Poverty looms large in the horizon of many middle class families. Parents of poor middle class families look upon family planning as a blessing. They adopt all sorts of birth control devices, and try their best to stop multiplication of offspring. We may say that the family planning programme of our government has become very popular among the middle class people.

The picture is altogether different in the villages where most of the people are poor and belong to lower classes of society. In the rural areas of India a family wants quite a few children, especially sons, to help the father in his work and support parents in their old age. If there are more sons in the family, some may find jobs in towns and help the parents. Again, in most of the villages deep-rooted prejudices and superstitions influence the population, and women who are willing to adopt birth control devices are generally viewed unfavourably. Our government is aware of these facts and has made elaborate arrangements for making family planning popular in the rural areas.

We arrive at the conclusion that upper and middle classes of Indian society have already made the family planning programme a success and that the lower class people are slowly getting attracted to it. (578 words)

122. Unemployment (CL '53, 73, Misc '72)

Or, The acute unemployment problem in your State
(WBCS '73)

Unemployment has been a chronic feature of Indian economy. The unemployment problem is acute in most of the States of India, but in West Bengal it is assuming alarming proportions. An examination of the recent census data and live-registers of employment exchanges shows that West Bengal

has the largest number of unemployed young men and women. The total number of unemployed is 2·8 millions and if under-employment is taken into account then the figure would come to 4·5 millions.

Now the question arises : Why is the unemployment problem so acute in West Bengal ? West Bengal is a thickly populated State. The city of Calcutta, the State capital, has a very dense population. Calcutta attracts jobseekers from all States of India. The partition of India led to the arrival of a large number of people from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to West Bengal. The joint family system has been a contributing factor to the explosion of unemployment in West Bengal. The people of West Bengal are interested in white-collar jobs. They are rather unwilling to accept jobs which require manual work. Fewness of industrial units in West Bengal is also responsible for its acute unemployment problem. The two United Front governments clouded the industrial climate in West Bengal. Coercive methods like strike and gherao were responsible for the closure of many factories and workshops. Some big business houses shifted their units from this State to other peaceful States. All these factors have made the problem of unemployment so acute in West Bengal.

The acute unemployment problem has created political and social unrest in West Bengal. Unemployed young men are being recruited by mischievous politicians for their selfish interests. Many bright students are giving up studies and joining politics in the hope of changing the political set up of the country. Perhaps the greatest casualty of the unemployment problem is education. Schools and colleges of West Bengal cannot function smoothly because the students have become totally indifferent to studies. Mass copying in examination and other evils of the academic world of West Bengal are ultimately traceable to the problem of unemployment. The process of disintegration is likely to start in a society in which the majority of young men and women are uncertain about their future. If the present situation continues for an indefinite period of time, a great upheaval will take place in West Bengal.

The present education system should be changed to meet the recent socio-economic needs of the society. Expansion of primary education is one of the programmes within the education sector which can increase employment opportunities, particularly for teachers. If a massive programme of adult literacy is undertaken, many educated young men and women can be appointed as teachers. The State government should pass a legislation to ensure that every industrial unit appoint the required number of engineers and diploma-holders in engineering and technology according to its scale of production. This would increase the demand for technical personnel in many industries. A massive programme of construction in rural areas can create considerable employment opportunities. The self-employment scheme popularized in Gujarat and Kerala may be considered in West Bengal. Both the Union Government and the State Governments are trying to solve this problem by undertaking a number of special employment measures for the benefit of small farmers, agricultural labourers and educated unemployed including engineers and technicians, besides the crash scheme for rural employment. The Nationalised Banks also render financial assistance to entrepreneurs deserving to set up industrial units or to take up various economic activities like transport business, retail trade, small business and improved agricultural activities. If all these measures work satisfactorily along with the industrial expansion and the control of the growth of population in this state, the acute unemployment problem from which this State now suffers, can be tackled effectively (618 words)

123. Commercial Education—its cultural and practical value (WBCS '73)

We are living in an age of commerce. Commercial activities have increased in every country after the Second World War. It is due mainly to the improvement of transport system. Now the commercial activities of a country are not limited within its boundaries. Commodities of one country are being sent to markets of other countries. Every country is trying to capture some foreign market. It goes without saying that an uneducated

businessman cannot organize commercial activities of the modern world. So commercial education has become very important in the present age.

In the past very few students received commercial education. But now many students get themselves admitted in commerce colleges. Gone are the days when commercial education was supposed to be meant for the dull students. We find now many brilliant students who are eager to receive commercial education. Thus only meritorious students are allowed to read at the Institute of Business Management at Calcutta. Indeed, commercial education has great cultural value. It has added dignity to commercial activities. Modern businessmen are not ignorant persons; they receive commercial education before they start business. They cannot hope to achieve success in business without some knowledge of accountancy, book-keeping and commercial laws. Study of commerce subjects enables businessmen to understand problems of the commercial world. In ancient India commercial employments were meant for people belonging to lower classes. Among the Aryans the businessmen were given the lowest rank in the social ladder. In Europe, even in the early years of the present century, young men of aristocratic families held aloof from what was called the vulgarity of business. Commercial education has removed such prejudices from our minds. This is one of the greatest values of commercial education.

Nowadays the demand for job-oriented education is being put forward from different quarters. Commercial education is job-oriented; it has much practical value. Most of the students who study general arts or science subjects cannot utilize their knowledge in any way when they begin their professional career. Literature, philosophy, history, physics and chemistry enrich the minds of students, but they have very little practical utility in life. In this respect commerce subjects stand contrasted with general arts and science subjects. Study of accountancy, book-keeping and auditing has practical value. Students, who study these subjects, receive training for their professional career. Commerce students are likely to become competent employees in government and commercial offices.

There is no denying that commerce students after graduation *easily turn from learning to earning.*

For a commercial career, the need for good training and experience in business management and technique of work cannot be too highly emphasized. At the present moment the widespread and increasing problem of unemployment among the educated youths has brought the question of commercial careers to the forefront. If successful enterprises can grow up with the expansion of industries in the country, the opportunities of commercial career will be much larger.

Commercial education in our country is still in its infancy. Even now more emphasis is laid on humanities or science stream of education. Arrangements for commercial education in India are not at all satisfactory. Many commerce colleges have no buildings of their own. In most of the commerce colleges students can read only at night. As commercial education has great cultural value and practical utility, our government should try to improve its standard. If commercial education is properly imparted to our students, the unemployment problem of the country will become easier to tackle. We hope that the standard of commercial education will improve and it will become more popular in the years to come.

(595 words)

124. Scope of expansion of India's foreign trade

(WBCS '75)

With the termination of the Second World War there were broad changes in the volume, composition and direction of India's foreign trade. Partition of the country also brought about some notable changes in the composition and direction of India's foreign trade. India was an exporter of raw jute prior to the partition of the country. After the partition she became an importer of raw jute from Pakistan. She had also to import raw cotton from Pakistan. India also faced a deficit in foodgrains and as such had to import foodgrains from foreign countries. India, though essentially an agricultural country, had to import foodgrains, raw jute, raw cotton, wheat etc. because she could not as yet reach the level of self-suffici-

ency in agricultural production. The turning point in India's foreign trade since partition came with the devaluation of the rupee in Sept. '49 as there was an increase in the volume of export and rise in price-level.

There has been a remarkable change in the pattern of India's foreign trade during the Plan Period. India has been now exporting a number of non-traditional items, i.e. items other than traditional goods like jute products, textile goods, tea, sugar etc. Previously India would export mainly raw materials and import finished products. Now, India also has begun to export finished products. Finished steel is now being exported by India to West African countries. Railway wagons are being exported to East European countries including Soviet Union.

Imports of foodgrains occupy an important position. Imports of machinery and transport equipments and metal products also occupy important position. Of the exports jute manufactures, tea and cotton textiles still hold the important position. But diversification of exports particularly exports of metal, metal manufactures (including machinery, equipment and engineering goods), railway wagons, electric bulbs, iron ore, chemicals and allied products have been gaining importance in our export trade. The State Trading Corporation has been exploring new markets for India's exportable goods.

Another remarkable change in the pattern of India's foreign trade has been achieved with the exploration of new export markets. Now, India has been maintaining trade relations with a large number of countries including the countries of East Europe, West Africa and South-East Asia. Britain's share in India's foreign trade has declined to a very large extent since Britain entered in the European Common Market. In respect of India's foreign trade both USA and USSR hold a very high position. The chronic shortage of foreign exchange reserves stands in the way of further expansion of India's foreign trade.

If India is to compete with foreign countries in exploring new markets for her products, she must try to improve the quality of her exportable goods and revitalize her machinery

for publicity in foreign countries. There is no doubt that there are many commodities in India (e.g. silken garments, leather goods, cottage industry products etc.) which have potentially bigger market in foreign countries than they actually possess at present. Thus there is scope for further expansion of foreign trade and with this object exports of non-traditional goods should be encouraged and production of those commodities which have export potentialities should be encouraged. The balance of trade was sharply affected recently due to rise in the import bill because of the OPEC's decision to raise the oil price further. To mitigate this loss the volume of exports should be raised and the volume of imports should be restricted.

(567 words)

125. The importance of small-scale industry

(WBCS '76)

In the industrial structure of India, we come across three sectors of industries. They are the organised sector represented by large-scale factories, the unorganised sector at widely dispersed cottage industries and in between the two, the sector of small-industries. For purposes of development, small-scale industries were originally defined as industrial units with a capital of not more than Rs. 5 lakhs, irrespective of the number of persons employed. The limit has since been enlarged. Today a unit with an investment of Rs. 7.5 lakhs in machinery and equipment is classified as a small-scale industry. In the case of ancillary industries that manufacture components and parts for larger industries, the limit is put at Rs. 10 lakhs. Industries that employ less than 50 persons when using power and less than 100 persons when not using power are usually recognised as small-scale industries.

In accordance with the Government's policy of broad-basing entrepreneurship and preventing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, several items of production have been set aside specifically for the small-scale sector. The big houses will not be allowed to enter this area of reserved production. About Rs. 1660 crores would be available for small industries in the Fifth Plan from public sector and from private sources including banking and financial institutions. The significant point is

that the small-scale sector has expanded to non-traditional industries such as pipes, fittings, bolts and nuts and similar mechanical accessories. *Small-scale units' role in the production of various types of test and measuring instruments, electronic equipments, computers and calculators* is encouraging.

Unfortunately the quantitative growth of the small-scale sector has not been matched by adequate attention and concern for quality. While India has made rapid advances in the past 25 years in economic and technological growth, the fact that industries had tended to agglomerate around a few urban centres and that 65 per cent of the small-scale units were located in Delhi, Maharashtra, Punjab, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, would provide no ground for complacency whatever.

One of the major steps in modernising small-scale industries is the establishment of industrial estates, especially in rural areas. Building, power, transport and all other requirements of a modern industry are provided in these estates. Individuals, corporate companies and co-operative societies are invited to make use of these well-equipped estates towards larger production and all-round development of their small-scale industries.

As a matter of fact, the deficiencies of large-scale industries are the advantages of the small-scale ones. The former faces managerial obstacles when it widens further; but the small firms can exercise personal supervision over all the employees, maintain personal contact with them, meet the needs of special markets and special tastes, by using the skill of human hands and thus fostering creative energy and pride of workmanship. The population of India is increasing at a rapid rate. The large-scale industries alone cannot give employment to all. The development of cottage and small-scale industry is necessary for reducing unemployment. In India, there is a shortage of capital but an abundant supply of labour. As cottage and small industries do not require much capital, they are very suitable for India. Cottage and small industries will not only increase the wealth and income of India but will also distribute them evenly among the masses and solve the unemployment problem to some extent. Large-scale manufacturing industries

may increase the wealth of the few but they impoverish the masses. Cottage and small industries will decentralise production and do away with certain problems that afflict modern society, e g. struggle between labour and capital.

In view of all this, the small-scale industry appears to predict a better future for India. (592 words)

(h) POLITICAL TOPICS

126. Internationalism—Fact or Fiction ? (WBCS '62)

The nineteenth century was an era of nationalism. Certain national states took final shape in this period and the spirit of nationalism swept practically all over Europe. While this gave an incentive to national reconstruction and had, therefore, a beneficial effect in certain directions, in others it was felt to be a hindrance rather than a help. In some cases, it gave rise to a spirit of emulation and a desire to further the national interest at the expense of other nations, and this led many a nation into bloody conflict. Hence the history of the nineteenth century was little more than the history of a series of conflicts fought with no other motive than self-aggrandisement. This led the thinking man of the world to discard nationalism as a desirable goal for mankind. They thought that the human mind should learn to travel beyond national frontiers and look upon the whole world as its home. A man should be the citizen of the world and not of any particular state. Some of these thinkers, notably Marx and Engels, thought that if there was to be any conflict, it should be between the oppressed and the oppressor and for this purpose all the workers of the world should unite in the common object to prevent the moneyed class, the capitalists, from exploiting them. The world socialist movement had its origin in these ideas.

It is true that international idea has made some progress in recent years. Communism has its followers in all progressive countries of the world. A section of the communists still preaches the necessity for class conflict in order to eradicate whatever traces of capitalism still pollute the world. But the other section seems to have developed a spirit of accommodation in

recent years and they are in favour of co-existence. Socialists in this section depend on time and the inexorable course of history to wipe out the remains of the capitalist system. All communists speak of the progress of humanity as a whole than of the welfare of the nation to which they happen to belong. All this sounds very well. But this profession of world-brotherhood has not yet been put to any severe test. It is too early to accept the statement on its face value that there can never be any conflict between two socialist states and in case of a conflict between a socialist and a capitalist state, the socialists in the latter will not fight for their own country. Already the air is thick with rumours that the relation between the two leading communist states, Russia and China, are far from friendly. If the worst happens and a war breaks out between these communist states that will be irrefutable evidence that internationalism is as yet only skindeep and in any real emergency it is overridden by the nationalist idea. The fact is that it requires a high degree of culture and tolerance to be truly internationalist in outlook and we are far from that level yet. But it is not too much to hope that in the unforeseeable future man will be able to shed his nationalist feelings to be a true internationalist. (530 words)

127. Patriotism and Internationalism (IAS'58, '74, Misc '74)

Patriotism is love for one's own country. True patriotism impels a man to dedicate his life for any hardships and sufferings for the cause of his country. Patriots who lay down their lives to save their country from foreign enemies have won immortal fame even though they failed in their object. Patriots are courageous, honourable and self-sacrificing. Freedom of a country is attained through the sacrifices of these patriots.

Patriotism is very closely related to Nationalism, which has been defined as the sentiment of nationhood. It arises from the feeling that every man owes his first and last duty to the nation. The French Revolution with its clarion cry of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" kindled the flame of nationalism not only among the French people, but also influenced the nationalist movements in other countries as well. Aggressive nationalism

as followed by Western Powers in conquering colonies of weaker races in Asia and Africa led to ceaseless conflicts, misunderstandings and frictions among sovereign national States which culminated in two World Wars in the present century.

Contrary to this patriotism or nationalism, the ideals of internationalism or the world citizenship are gaining momentum in the modern world. Today we must develop an awareness of the obvious dangers which face mankind on account of the existence of sovereign national States. Nationalism succeeded in bringing together communities living within a geographical unit. It should now gracefully make room for internationalism which aims at unifying all nations together. As a matter of fact internationalism is as yet only skin-deep and in any real emergency it is overridden by the nationalist idea. Patriotism will have also its existence and importance in the nationalist State. Whatever form of Government a country may have, the feeling of patriotism is almost universal. International amity is in the present age the only guarantee for the prosperity of each single nation. (310 words)

128. Nationalism and internationalism (WBCS '74)

Nationalism may be defined as the sentiment of nationhood. It arises from the feeling that every man owes his first and last duty to the nation. Originating in the gregarious instinct of man and nourished by the rational desire for self-government, nationalism came to be a force to be reckoned with during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As Lord Morley says, nationalism "from instinct became idea; from idea, abstract principle; then fervid prepossession; ending where it is today in dogma, whether accepted or evaded."

The French Revolution with its clarion cry of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" kindled the flame of nationalism not only among the French people, but also influenced the nationalist movement in other countries as well. During the nineteenth century nationalism took a militant turn, and brought about several revolutions which helped to create the new States like Belgium, Serbia and Rumania. It also showed its evil side. It inspired the Western powers to conquer colonies in Asia and

Africa. These powers popularized the doctrine that politically weak and incapable people must submit to the guidance and tutelage of the stronger and more resourceful nations. This doctrine led to ceaseless conflicts, mis-understandings and frictions among sovereign national states. Aggressive nationalism led to two World Wars in the present century.

Indeed, aggressive nationalism has become the greatest menace to peace in the modern world. The modern national states have started a crazy pursuit of power at any cost and by any means. They are producing more and more sophisticated weapons of destruction. If the present arms race continues the human race and human civilization will be destroyed very soon.

After the First World War the League of Nations was created for maintenance of peace in the world. Unfortunately the League became progressively weaker, and failed to check international frictions which exploded into the Second World War. At the end of the Second World War the U. N. O came into existence for the purpose of preservation of peace and settlement of international disputes. The U. N. O. is a symbol of internationalism. If the nations voluntarily surrender some of their powers and privileges to the U. N. O., it will be able to preserve international peace.

Nationalism played a very important role in the practical politics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But now it is a spent force. In the modern world we should be inspired by the ideals of internationalism. Today we must think internationally or we perish. On account of the miraculous achievements of science, distances have been minimized. Science has made neighbours of people living far apart in Europe and Asia. So we should aspire to become world citizens. We must develop an awareness of the obvious dangers which face mankind on account of the existence of sovereign national states. It is our duty to create a strong opinion in favour of international organizations which may promote international peace. Statesmen of all countries should seriously consider H.G. Wells's proposal that the nations of the world must not maintain their own fighting services and that

only the world organization should have military services for settling international disputes. Nationalism succeeded in bringing together communities living within a geographical unit. It should now gracefully make room for internationalism which aims at unifying all the nations together. As a matter of fact internationalism is as yet only skin-deep and in any real emergency it is overridden by the nationalist idea. But it is not too much to hope that in future men will be able to shed their nationalist feelings to become true internationalists.

(588 words)

129. Democracy (WBCS '67, IAS '68)

Or, The true role of political parties in a democracy
(IAS '59)

Democracy has been defined as "the Government of the people, by the people, and for the people." It is the only form of Government in which the will of the people is reflected in the administration. In other forms of Government such as monarchy, oligarchy etc, all the power is concentrated in the hands of one person or group of persons who carry on the administration irrespective of people's wishes. Even if those types of Government are conducted in the interest of the people, since the people have no connexion with the administration, they cannot feel very happy under them.

But though the masses are connected with the Government in a democracy, they cannot, obviously all of them, take an active part in the conduct of the Government. There was, of course, a time when the number of people in a state was limited and then such a method was possible and people could assemble in one place and take decision on all important matters by majority vote. This was the rule in the city-States of ancient Greece. But now with the phenomenal increase of population in each State it is not possible for each and every person in a State to take an active part in its administration. So people have to be represented by persons of their choice, to speak for them in the House of legislature and to keep watch over the activities of the Government.

The next question that arises is, who are the people who

can be safely entrusted with leadership in a democracy. A leader should identify himself with the people whom he professes to serve. It is his business to reflect the wishes and frustrations of the people in the council of the nation. He cannot obviously do so unless he has acquainted himself with these hopes and despairs by living with the common people and sharing their life. Rich or poor whatever he may be, devoted service to the people is the first requisite for leadership in a democracy,

The historical evolution of democracy is an interesting study. Kingship is found existing in all considerable Asian States till very recently. Though sometimes insurrections caused by some special act of tyranny overthrew a sovereign or even a dynasty but no one thought of changing the form of Government. In most of the cities in early Europe the Government seems to have been at first monarchical also. But arrogance and oppression provoked risings which in many cases ended by vesting power in all the free voters. Thus the early steps towards democracy came not from any doctrine that the people have a right to rule, but from the feeling that an end must be put to a lawless oppression by a privileged class.

The weakness of democracy should not be left out of consideration. This form of government attaches greater importance to quantity than to quality and since every person does not possess the same amount of political talents, a democratic government cannot ensure better administration of public affairs. Further this form of government lacks stability and is not favourable to the development of art, science and culture. It ensures neither better government nor greater liberty; indeed some of the strongest democratic tendencies are adverse to liberty. But whatever good or evil is the outcome of democracy, people, being more politically conscious now-a-days, favour a democratic Government. (562 words)

180. Has democracy been successful in India ?

(WBCS '69, IAS '50, '72, Misc '72)

India is a vast country with chronic poverty, disease, illiteracy and ignorance—political phenomena that prove to be

antithetical to democracy. A great sub-continent that is frequently torn by severe communal differences, language controversies and political squabbles, she hardly appears to be the congenial soil for the growth of democracy. And yet, she is the greatest living example of democracy in the East. Her teeming millions, though uneducated or half-educated enjoy the bliss of adult franchise. The chief architect of this democratic set-up was no doubt Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, a great believer in democracy. Summing up Nehru's achievement as a politician and statesman, Bertrand Russell said that every conceivable argument had been available to tempt him to forego the democratic institutions in India. He could have easily assumed the role of a dictator to crush the opposition in the Parliament. On the other hand it was he who took the initiative to foster healthy opposition in the Lok Sabha. Piloted by Nehru's scientific yet humane attitude to life, the whole country has learnt to respect the voice of the people. Free and impartial elections to the Assemblies and the Parliament have not only proved the merit of Indian people but also upheld the virtue of Indian democracy.

It must be pointed out that some recent calamities through which our country has passed almost pushed her to the brink of military rule or dictatorship. Nevertheless, she has been able to thwart such tendencies and has relied upon the judgment of the people of India. The Chinese aggression and the Indo-Pakistani war have no doubt hit the country economically and politically but they have left it a better and a unified nation, democratically resolved to fight out its problems.

The success of Indian democracy has been assured by the political events following the last general election in 1977. It was formerly thought that since Congress Party was the only organisation in the country which could achieve welfare of the people, its disintegration might lead to chaos or military dictatorship, sooner or later. But in the wake of that fateful election in the Centre and in several States of India non-Congress Governments were voted into power. It at once exploded the myth about the indispensability of the Congress and other unfounded fears connected with the issue of the multi-party rule. What is truly

remarkable about the democratic spirit of the people is that they have freely and independently cast their votes in favour of those who have been looked down upon by a section of people. The recent elections in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab have shown that opportunists in politics such as the defectors and turn-coats as well as those exercising abuses of power do not enjoy the confidence of the people. The overwhelming victory of the Left Front in West Bengal is a pointer to this direction. The political consciousness which goes into the making and smooth working of democracy is not lacking in our country although fissiparous tendencies are also there to make inroads on our democratic institutions. Though a section of the communists have openly declared their war on the ballot boxes, majority of them have in a disciplined way pledged their faith in the election or the parliamentary democracy. This is a healthy sign in view of the fact that in many Asian countries, not to speak of our closest neighbours, dictatorships are the go of the day.

Nevertheless, love of power, parochial aims and sectarianism are often eating up the vitals of our democratic institutions which only a healthy education system can stave off.

(598 words)

181. The ideal democratic society (WBCS '73)

Democracy has been defined as 'the government of the people, by the people and for the people'. Democracy is not a new concept in our century. In ancient times the Greek States had democratic form of government. Of course, it must be admitted that the concept of democracy has become popular in the twentieth century. In a democratic country people elect their representatives who form a ministry and run the administration. Thus democracy demonstrates the will and power of the people.

Now the question arises : What are the characteristics of the ideal democratic society ? The ideal democratic society must fulfil certain conditions. The most important feature of the democratic society is that all its members must be fairly educated. In a democracy power is concentrated in the hands of the common people. They can make and unmake

governments. So they should be properly educated. Uneducated men cannot choose their representatives rightly. Members of the ideal democratic society should have thorough knowledge of economic and political issues. They should know the history of their country thoroughly. Another important characteristic of the ideal democratic society is the political consciousness of its members. People who live in a democratic society must be aware of their rights and responsibilities. Every member of the ideal democratic society has to fight for the preservation of his rights. He should always remember his responsibilities towards the society. The ideal democratic society will consist of people who are all alike. The differences between one man and another are not considered in the ideal democratic society. In such a society the individual is generally lost in the multitude. Heroes cannot appear in the ideal democratic society. In a democracy, the legislature, composed of the people's representatives, wields a great power in formulating the policy of the government in the administration of the country.

In the modern world there are many democratic countries, but it is difficult to say whether the ideal democratic society exists in any one of them. Let us take the case of India which is the largest democracy in the world of today. Parliamentary democracy has been adopted in India after her independence. Democratic traditions have been established in the country. People are free to elect their representatives. People's representatives form both the Central government and State governments. They choose the President of the country. So we may believe that India provides an ideal example of democracy. But a careful examination of the present Indian society shows that it does not fulfil the conditions of the ideal democratic society. Most of the people of India are illiterate. In States like Rajasthan the literacy rate is only 15 p.c. The illiterate Indians, who live in rural and urban areas, have no idea about their rights and responsibilities. The age-old caste system prevails in the Indian society even today. The Hindus and Muslims live in water-tight compartments. There is practically no social intercourse between the two communities. The 'Harijans' are still regarded as untouchable. It is abun-

dantly clear that such a society cannot fulfil the conditions of the ideal democratic society.

We are living in an imperfect world. Here the ideal democratic society is not to be found. It does not exist in an old democratic country like America or in a new democratic country like Bangladesh. Perhaps England, the oldest cradle of democracy, provides the only example of the true democratic society, although the head of the State there is a hereditary King or Queen. The democratic society in England may be taken as an ideal one. With the spread of literacy and growing consciousness about the rights and responsibilities among the people, India may become an ideal democratic society in the future. (615 words)

132. Leadership in Democracy (WBCS '62, IAS '60)

Democracy has been defined as "the Government of the people, by the people and for the people". It is the only form of Government in which the will of the people is reflected in the administration. In other forms of Government such as monarchy, oligarchy etc., all the power is concentrated in the hands of one person or group of persons who carry on the administration irrespective of people's wishes. Even if those types of Government are conducted in the interest of the people, since the people have no connexion with the administration, they cannot feel very happy under them.

But though the masses are connected with the Government in a democracy, they cannot, obviously all of them, take an active part in the conduct of the Government. There was, of course, a time when the number of people in a state was limited and then such a method was possible and people could assemble in one place and take decision on all important matters by majority vote. This was the rule in the city states of ancient Greece. But now with the phenomenal increase of population in each state it is not possible for each and every person in a state to take an active part in its administration. So people have to be represented by persons of their choice, to speak for them in the houses of legislature and to keep watch over the activities of Government.

The question that arises is, who are the people who can be safely entrusted with the leadership in a democracy. The first requisite for a leader is to identify himself with the people whom he professes to serve. It is his business to reflect the wishes and frustrations of the people in the councils of the nation. He cannot obviously do so unless he has acquainted himself intimately with these hopes and despairs by living with the common people and sharing their life. With the spread of education and growing political consciousness, no person can hope to represent the people, who has no living link with them. Rich or poor whatever he may be, devoted service to the people is the first requisite for leadership in a democracy.

But mere service is not enough. Along with the spirit of sincere service the leader-to-be must be a forceful speaker and must be able to give pointed and effective expression to the desires of the people. He must be a man with an apparently inexhaustible fund of energy. This is necessary because all the time he has to keep himself in touch with the masses whom he serves and if he happens to be a person in the Opposition, to keep a constant watch over the activities of the Government which has to be prevented from doing anything illegal or inharmonious with the wishes of the people. In order to be able to do this, he is required to be a person with sound health also. He should have a broad and catholic outlook so that his vision may not be clouded and constricted by parochial questions which, after all, are ephemeral by nature.

(521 words)

139.

Public life in India

(WBCS '51)

Each and every citizen of a free country should contribute to the good of his motherland and instead of being simply contented with the private life alone should participate in the public life according to his capacity. Judged from the economic standpoint, India is now swinging towards industrialism though not yet wholly swallowed by it, and thus her public life revolves round the two strands—industrial cities and agricultural towns and villages. Public life in the industrial cities is more or less cosmopolitan, imbued with Western culture and ideas and

higher standards of living and is thus more advanced than in rural areas. On the other hand, it suffers from deep-seated discontent, labour unrest, widespread unemployment and monotony of life in dull drudgery of the fixed pursuits. Public life in the villages is still obscure, the population there being steeped in deep ignorance. Of course, in Free India, with the establishment of adult franchise, every adult citizen has direct or indirect contribution to the public life of the country. The people of India, whether living in cities or villages, are not yet quite conscious of their rights and privileges and importance of franchise and they are often guided and influenced by the opinions of the particular paper or party. The public life in India is in a state of pell-mell, which can be given any shape according to the liking of any political leader. Even those who take active parts in some political parties, often do so through impulses and sentiments and thus their attachment to that party often becomes short-lived. Students play an important role in the public life in India, though the politicians in power disfavour the political activities of the students, and for obvious reason, the student participants in political life strengthen the opposite camp. In a democratic country, public life is of prime importance because the administration rests in the hands of the people and while some actually conduct the government, others by their healthy and constructive criticisms may guide the ruling power towards welfare of the State. The social welfare and other humanitarian services also come within the purview of public life. India has at present a number of political parties, the chief of which is the Indian National Congress with its long history of national struggle against the British. It commanded the majority confidence till before the last general election of the Parliament and held the rein of Government in the Centre till March '77. The four non-CPI opposition parties, viz. the congress (O), the Jana Sangha, the Bharatiya Lok Dal and the Socialist party under the banner of Janata party and the Congress for Democracy (which also merged with the Janata party later on) emerged as a great power in the sixth General Election to the Lok Sabha in March '77 and achieved a landslide victory over the Congress. Thus a non-Congress Govern-

ment was installed in India for the first time since Independence. The poll verdict shows that a dictatorship cannot last long and that the public opinion in India has attained maturity to bring a revolution through ballot-box. In the States, some are being governed by the Congress parties, some by Janata party, West Bengal by the Left Front, while in others Coalitions of several parties other than Congress are holding the reins of Government. Other parties are—The Communist Party, the Communist Party (Marxist), D.M.K., AIADMK (All India Anna Dravida Mennetra Kazhagam), Gomantak party, the Forward Bloc, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the R. C. P. I., and many others, some of which are only factions of their original parties. Too many parties in India have weakened the political strength of the parties. Combination of some of these parties made them formidable against the strongholds of Congress. The public life in India is gradually waking up and if properly guided, it is hoped that soon it will rise to the pinnacle of glory.

(638 words)

134. **The Ideals of Public Service** (*WBCS '53*)

Each and every citizen of a free country should contribute to the good of his motherland and instead of being simply contented with the private life alone should participate in the public life according to his capacity. The ideals which should inspire the actions of a public servant are the same as those of a true citizen, namely to make the best contribution to the common good of his people and the humanity, to promote the interests of the society in which he lives and to be of service to the social organisations.

The public service includes in a broad sense not only the covenanted services under the Union and the State Governments, and the executive, judicial and military services of the country, but also other services, high and low, under various departments of government, local organizations and public utility undertakings. In whichever calling, high or low, he is attached, a public servant must perform his duties sincerely and honestly and should be very amiable in treatment with the common public. He should be above any

bias, partiality or nepotism. He should always be loyal and law-abiding and should not at any time harass the public in wrongful exercise of his power or accept any illegal gratification for doing or forbearing to do any official act.

The ideals of a public servant consist in his readiness to work and suffer for the sake of the general welfare of all people in his country and the world. His first task is to keep his body physically fit, to educate himself thoroughly and to develop his judgement properly so as to follow his ideal. He must learn the literature, science and fine arts of his country. After having instructed himself in these subjects he should find out all the best elements in the national life and culture. His ideal should be to preserve and promote all these elements. That he may serve in any public office to the best of his capacity, he must be inspired by a spirit of devotion. He should always try to subordinate his own interests to those of his country. He should follow those measures and policies which will promote the common good of all.

Patriotism is an important ideal of a public servant. A true patriot will serve his country to the best of his capacity. But he will not seek false glory in exploitation of other people. The spirit of service to all and service above self should be the true ideal of every public servant.

A public servant should cultivate a progressive outlook in all affairs. He should be ready to discard those customs and traditions which in any way hamper the welfare of the people. He should foster the right sense of civic consciousness among his neighbours and associates and create the conditions which are favourable to progress, happiness and self-realisation of every citizen. These ideals cannot be fully realized except in a democratic country having spread of education, abolition of poverty and economic liberty for everybody. For want of proper selection of men in such public appointments, many great talents have gone unused to the grave and the spirit of public service has also been vitiated by a number of vices. India, in her march of progress, is now in great need of such workers who would establish an ideal public service in the country.

(564 words)

135. "No Government can be long secure without a formidable opposition" (WBCS '52)

The opposition means the chief parliamentary party opposed to that in office. Whatever be the number of parties contesting at election or finally securing seats in the Legislature, ultimately two parties prevail. The majority party, composed of a single party or a coalition of a number of parties in a Parliament, holds the rein of government of the country and the minority party, composed of a single or more groups, forms the opposition. The Ministry and the Parliamentary Secretaries are selected from this majority party. A minimum strength in terms of percentage of the total membership of the House is prescribed by every Legislature for the formation of a recognised Opposition Party in the House. In the event of any single party failing to secure this minimum strength, groups in Opposition are recognized, who are entitled to separate blocs of seats but not to the other privileges usually attached to an Opposition Party; though for practical purposes all such groups often combine themselves as one body in opposing the actions of the government. The two parties are like the two disciplined armies, the majority party always tries to support his party government in office, while the opposition tries to discredit it in order to replace it. The government party has often to swallow its scruples and to support the government in all its doings and has practically no liberty of frank and candid criticism against the government. Thus while the Government Party has a limited scope or criticising or properly guiding the ruling powers, the Opposition Party wields a great power in criticising the activities of the government. It may register a lack of confidence against a Ministry by a direct vote of no confidence, or by a vote to reduce the salary of Ministers, or to reject a Government Bill or measure. Even when they are outnumbered by the votes of the majority party, they may record their dissent with the provisions of the Bill or the policies of the Government by walk-out or other means of protest. They may also suggest important amendments and modifications to the Bills presented by the Government. The opposition by its criticism serves as

an effective check upon the arbitrary action of the party in power and prevents them from adopting any measure prejudicial to the interest of the people. With a view to increasing the number of their supporters, the members of the opposition often keep close touch with the public and through them the voice of the people is reflected on the Government. Thus without a formidable opposition, the government is susceptible to corruption or autocracy leading the country to the ruin. Thus the existence of a strong opposition is essential in a democratic country for the well-being of the State. But at the same time the objective of the opposition should not simply be the dethronement of the party in power and capturing the office in their place. It would indeed be a calamity if there is no true opposition based on the real cause of the people and it would only hasten a Nemesis for the country. (517 words)

136. The Virtues and Vices of a bureaucratic

Government

(WBCS '66)

The bureaucratic government represents a type of government in which the responsible posts are occupied by persons who have obtained special training for the purpose and whose ability to govern has been tested by examination. These persons remain in office during good behaviour and retire on pensions. In this system the administration is run by persons who have made the public service a profession of their own and they devote their time and energy to the public service for pecuniary gains. This form of government exists today in varying degrees in many countries. The Government of India may be termed as bureaucratic because here the government posts of responsibilities are occupied by those who have passed the service examination and have been specially trained for such administration.

The system of bureaucratic form of government widely differs from the popular government which means government by persons chosen from the ranks of the people and who while rendering their services to the community for a period of time are engaged in other occupations of their own. In a bureaucratic form of government with any change in the Ministry or in

the ruling Party consequent on the General Election, the administrative framework does not undergo any material change. The bureaucratic government is undoubtedly the best form of government if the efficiency of administration is the sole end of government.

The bureaucratic government is no modern innovation. The students of history know that King Asoka, Akbar and all others had to depend on an elaborate form of bureaucracy for the good administration of their kingdom. All forms of government today fully rely on bureaucrats. Many eminent social scientists have absolute faith on the importance and effectiveness of bureaucrats for the good government of the country. According to them pure bureaucratic form of administrative organisation is capable of application to all kinds of administrative tasks and is indispensable for maintaining the level of civilization the West had achieved. Today most bureaucrats are career bureaucrats and they are given specialised training before being put to any particular department of the government. As they have specialised knowledge of their department it is they who only can inspire trust and faith about the government in the minds of the public.

But a bureaucratic form of government has recently been subject to severe criticism by social thinkers. This form of government is not favourable to the growth of patriotism, self-reliance or loyalty. They form a class by themselves much away from the common people and thus they do not contribute much to the welfare of the country. The extreme fondness for routine, a dull and even doctrinaire following of familiar ways of doing things often make bureaucracy an object of ridicule. But despite their devotion to rules, the top government officials are often arbitrary in making decisions. Seldom do they care for reason or justice. Another very important malady is an inordinate passion for fact finding and record-keeping which indulge red-tapism. Today bureaucracy has degenerated into a vicious machinery. Thus inactive and incapable men are often charged with responsibilities. Among such officials there is always a timidity and absence of any dash or creative genius.

In their hands, the government is turned to be a static machinery without any progressive outlook. (542 words)

187. The Welfare State (WBCS '69, IAS '50)

Recent experiments on nation-wide economic and social reforms after World War II have brought the Welfare State into prominence and its policies are being imitated or followed the world over. The Welfare State is a state which does not confine itself to the discharging of mere police functions but takes a wider view of its obligations and undertakes all its activities which are considered necessary and desirable to remove social evils and promote the welfare of the population. If it does not recognize this obligation or if it recognizes it to a very limited extent it remains a police state or a *laissez faire* state i. e. backing private enterprises.

The distinguishing characteristic of the Welfare State is the assumption by the community acting through the State of the responsibility for providing the means whereby all its members can reach minimum standards of health, economic security and civilized living, and can share according to their capacity in its social and cultural heritage.

The concept of Welfare State is often equated with socialism. Thus, in India the terms socialism, democratic socialism, socialistic pattern of society and welfare state are often used synonymously. It is even made to cover such things as the abolition of untouchability and the creation of a classless society. It is generally accepted that the provision of a minimum standard of life and the maintenance of full employment for all citizens as a distinguishing feature of the Welfare State. The acceptance of the Welfare State as a model for Indian development is explicit both in the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution and in the Plans.

What distinguishes a Welfare State is not the provision of welfare but the manner in which it is sought within the framework of democratic political institutions. It rejects the desirability of total mobilization of the economy and represents the contemporary desire to discover the middle way between communism on the one hand and unregulated free enterprise on

the other. The objectives of the Welfare State were considered to be reasonable increase in the national income to raise the standard of living in the country; rapid industrialization; fuller employment; social justice and equality of wealth and income; and social security measures for the working class. The State is now looked upon as the most important agency for the provision of welfare. The Welfare State is also a synonym for an ideal state. To some people it seems to conjure a Golden Age or a 'Ram Rajya', the like of which existed in Ancient India.

The government of Asoka, the pattern of government outlined in the Arthashastra of Kautilya, the Age of the Imperial Guptas and the reign of Harshavardhan have all been described as welfare states. To many people it symbolizes the goal of nationalism—the creation of classless and casteless society, free from exploitation in every form. It stands also for the attainment of a minimum level of economic development for all citizens and for the preservation of freedom. The Elizabethan England and the Victorian England, by making provisions for state support for amelioration of poverty and various welfare activities were to a great extent a welfare state. Most Western European capitalist societies today accept the need for state intervention to provide minimum incomes and to protect against social contingencies through legislation. All modern governments do provide old age pensions, sickness, disability and maternity benefits, industrial injury pensions, unemployment benefits and family allowances and medical benefits.

Even in a Welfare State complete absence of police action is to some extent dangerous inasmuch as the anti-social elements and ruffians play the upperhand and the innocent people suffer most. (603 words)

188. The Role of the Government in a Modern State

(CL '53)

A Modern State is not a police-State but its ideal is to become a "Welfare State" and as such maintenance of law and order is not the only function of a Government in such a State. It concerns itself with a great many functions with a view to promoting the welfare of the people and is ready to undertake

all types of activities if required for the well-being of the entire body of citizens.

These functions of the Government are divided into two broad classes—(a) essential functions and (b) optional functions. The essential functions are those that must be performed by the State if it is to preserve its existence and integrity. For defending the country against foreign attack the State must maintain an army, a navy and an air force sufficient to protect it from foreign aggression. Secondly, the State must maintain a foreign affairs department to protect its international rights and communicate with other States. The State must also preserve internal peace and order as otherwise no progress of the country can be achieved. The State must, therefore, maintain sufficient force to protect the life and property of the subjects from violence and robbery, to punish all criminals, and to prevent the occurrence of riots and disturbances. There should also be an efficient and honest judiciary to administer justice to the people and enable each man to enjoy his fundamental rights without interference from others.

The optional functions are performed by a State not for maintenance of its existence but for promoting the moral and material welfare of the community. The modern State provides for the education of its citizens, as without it they will not be able to discharge their civic duties efficiently. Previously education was left to private enterprise, but now States establish and maintain schools, colleges, universities, museums, libraries, art galleries in order to educate the people. A modern State also undertakes the responsibility for protection of public health and provision of medical relief. It establishes and supports hospitals, dispensaries, medical institutions etc. The State also regulates the currency and coinage of the country and exercises supervision over the banking institutions. It achieves growth of its industries through proper control of tariff, duties and protection.

Modern government fixes the hours of labour and other conditions of work in factories by legislation. It supports the workers in sickness or unemployment by giving financial aids and providing other forms of social security for labour. The

State also maintains poor houses to support the poor, the orphans and the infirm. Many modern States pay old age pensions to help the aged. States have also constructed roads, railways and irrigation works etc. They maintain the public utility services like Posts and Telegraph Offices, Railways, Telephone communications etc.

It is now recognised that the Government in a Modern State should also assume the responsibility for curing unemployment so that everybody may secure a job. Modern States should aim at providing full employment within the country. A government can be said to be successful when it renders service to the people in general and brings prosperity to the country. (517 words)

189. "The growing ills of our country are to be traced principally to the increasing centralisation of powers." (WBCS '59)

The fundamental objects of government of a State are maintenance of external security, preserving internal order and honouring national and international contracts and obligations. Promotion of education and culture, as well as development and protection of commerce and industry are also important functions of government. A government may be unitary or federal. A democracy is naturally based on federal principle, while a monarchy or an aristocracy is by nature unitary and autocratic. The Constitution of India provides a federal system of government in normal times, but in emergencies the Union is capable of controlling the States and transforming the government of the whole country into that of a unitary State. Even in normal times the Union is capable of giving administrative directions to the States. Thus the Indian Constitution, like the Canadian, provides the system of government of the Units of the Union as well, while the U. S. and Australian Constitutions deal only with the federal government and leave the Units to frame their own Constitution.

India is a vast sub-continent consisting of a large number of distinct units separated from one another by distance, language, culture and custom. To hold them all together under a

common bond of nationhood is obviously a tremendous job. This cannot be feasible without a strong government at the Centre. Opinions of political and constitutional scholars often differ on this point. There is a feeling among some people that too much centralisation of power has been responsible for many of our ills. They characterize the country's government as a one-man show and seek to argue that the Prime Minister is virtually a dictator at the head of the democracy. There are others who contend that considering the peculiar position of the Indian Republic in the national and international set-up, centralisation of power is of utmost necessity. They argue that in view of the unavoidable conflicts of interests,—cultural, linguistic and communal—within the country, and the policy of non-alignment which the government pursues in its international relations, increasing centralisation of power must be acceded to by the people.

A sort of compromise has to be found between these two conflicting views. While agreeing that certain amount of centralisation of authority is unavoidable in India in the present set-up of things, one has to bear in mind that too much power at the Centre may at times prove detrimental to the interests of the common man and some of the federated States. A State legislature may sometimes fail to share the views of the Centre in respect of certain decisions affecting the constitutional rights and interests of the State concerned, if the decisions have been taken without consulting the State legislature. The latest instance of this was the proposed transfer of certain areas of West Bengal to Pakistan under the Nehru-Noon Agreement. It is contended that the autonomous State of West Bengal cannot, under Constitution, agree to part with any portion of its territory, even if it is unilaterally decided upon in the larger interest of the country.

Decentralisation of authority to the utmost extent possible is the very spirit of republican form of government, but occasions are bound to arise when the Centre has to assume dictatorial powers by the application of the Constitution to meet the emergency. [The cry of democracy in danger is sometimes a handy weapon against centralisation of power.

(560 words)

140. Independence of the Judiciary (WBCS '51, IAS '73)

The Judiciary of a State consists of that body of officials who settle the complaint and disputes between subject and subject or between State and subject and watch if the laws of the State have been violated in any way. Since the time of Aristotle, the political thinkers have agreed that the judicial power should be completely separated from other aspects of political authority so that the subject may feel an assurance that his case will be tried independent of any executive or other influences. Of course, absolute separation is not possible because the judges who arrange the order of court business, may reasonably be said to be doing some executive work. According to some, the theory of separation of powers would mean executive and judiciary placed on the same footing. Normally the independence of the judiciary is achieved by the mode of appointment of the judges without the intervention of the executive and by the irremovability of Judges, save for serious misconduct. In Great Britain the Judges are usually appointed by the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor or the Home Secretary according to the post involved. All appointments are for life and subject only to good behaviour, that is no judge of the highest Court would be dismissed save by an address to the Crown from both Houses of Parliament. In the States of the American Union, selection of Judges is made either by executive appointment subject to the consent of the advisory body or by election direct by the Legislature. In India, the independence of the Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts are sought to be secured by the Constitution which provides that the Judges should hold office during good behaviour till the age of 60 and should not be removed by the President except on a joint address by both Houses of Parliament on ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity and that their salaries, allowances, leave and pension and the normal charges for the running of these Courts would be charged on the Consolidated Fund of India and not be dependant on the vote of the Legislature. In lower courts in India, however, no such independence of the judiciary has been achieved and till sometime

before even the criminal cases were tried by the Magistrates and the Deputy Magistrates, who were the executive officials. The danger to the appointment of the Judiciary by the executive heads is that to secure executive choice, motives not befitting the judicial position may enter into the service.

The system of Judicial civil service has much to be commended, specially for original appointments. It provides a notable safeguard against favouritism. The independence of the Judiciary is further safeguarded by the Law of Habeas Corpus, Mandamus etc. and the provision for summary proceedings in case of Contempt of Court. The Habeas Corpus provides that nobody should be put to detention without trial for a sufficient period of time without sufficient causes and he should be brought before the court issuing the Writ immediately for proper trial. There are still some special powers in the hands of the executive to detain any suspected person in defiance of the Habeas Corpus or other Writs. The Judiciary of this country is not at present completely independent of the executive influence, though the idea of implementing a complete separation of the two has engaged the serious attention of the jurists and the politicians of this country. As a matter of fact several States have already made much progress in this respect. West Bengal has also started separation of the Judiciary from the executive in a phased programme. (602 words)

141. **Bad Laws are the worst sort of tyranny**

(WBCS '53)

Whenever an organisation is formed, it makes certain rules to regulate its activities and to guide the conduct of the members. These rules may be framed and approved by the members themselves, but once formed, the members must abide by the rules. Similarly, the State has also to frame certain rules to define its functions and field of activities and to guide and regulate the conduct of the citizens. These rules are known as *Laws*. Two things are thus necessary to constitute a law. First, there must be a set of uniform rules laying down or prohibiting a course of action ; and secondly, those rules must be enforced by the government. If anybody disobeys these rules, he will be punished by the government.

The State passes laws to define the rights and duties of the people and to guarantee equal rights and opportunities to all the law-abiding citizens. The purpose of laws is to enable citizens to develop all that is best in them. But if bad laws are framed for the benefit of the ruling class to restrict the liberty or freedom of the people or to interfere with their actions, movements and speeches at every step, then the administration becomes tyrannical and the life is not worth living. Hence many attempts have been made in every country to safeguard the liberty of the individual citizen, which can be achieved through passing of good laws. Of course bad laws do no harm themselves when the administration is good and even the best laws are of no use when the administration is bad or tyrannical. In the words of Goldsmith—"Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the Law". Since there is no certainty about the nature of the party holding the reins of government, great responsibility devolves on the legislators making laws for the country.

Liberty is ordinarily secured in a democratic country where the sovereign power resides in the hands of the masses, but still power often corrupts men and the ministers and public servants may fall from their ideals, abuse their power and do things which curtail the liberty of citizens.

The functions of modern government are usually divided into three parts—legislative, executive and judicial. The legislative function consists mainly in the making of laws. The executive function is concerned with the administration of these laws. The judicial function relates to the interpretation of these laws and to the punishment of law-breakers. Thus there are three organs of government and in a progressive country these are entrusted to separate organs each independent of the other two, so that nobody will be able to oppress the people and the liberty of citizens will be safeguarded. But if all powers are placed in the hands of one person or a body of persons, he or they may exercise despotic powers having none to check them, which happened in the case of ancient monarchies. The King made any law he liked and was himself the prosecutor and judge. He passed arbitrary laws and executed them tyrannically. As a result, people were often oppressed. If

executive officers are also judges, they may arrest a person illegally, try him arbitrarily and put him to jail. But when these powers are given to independent persons, executive officers will not dare arrest a person illegally for fear of the judges. Bad laws, even if made, will not be enforced because they will not be approved by the able, honest and fearless judges. Where law fails to give relief to the people, to protect the virtuous and law-abiding people and punish the offenders to the society or to individuals, the democracy goes to pieces and the law loses its sanctity and becomes a source of tyranny. (624 words)

142. **Law is a condition of Liberty** (WBCS '61, IAS '63)
Or, 'Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains' (IAS '59)

Liberty is sometimes misinterpreted as freedom from the restraint of law. People, being given liberty, are sometimes known to act in a manner subversive of law. When they are opposed they try to justify themselves by saying that since they are free they can do whatever they like and nobody has any right to demand any explanation from them. These people apparently confuse liberty with licence. Doing as one likes without regard for the rights of others is an act of licence and deserves as severe a condemnation as any criminal action. Liberty, on the contrary, is based upon a recognition of the rights of other people and a proper attitude of respect for Law which regulates relations between individuals and maintains social equilibrium. Although Liberty warrants the enjoyment of fundamental rights by each individual, this freedom of a just man is worth little to him if he can be preyed upon by the murderer or thief and if the society cannot protect the just and punish the wicked members of the society who harm the property or person of other members. Without law society will be thrown into utter confusion. Law defines the rights and duties of individuals towards others and the society, and any infringement or violation of law is guarded against and prevented by the machinery of the State. Thus Law, though brings some limitations on the conception of Liberty, is an essential condition for the proper enjoyment of liberty.

Law is the expression of the will of the community. Like any other organism, society also may be credited with the instinct of self-preservation. Law gives expression to these principles that are necessary for survival. If, therefore, any person acts in contravention of law, he is in fact conspiring to put an end to corporate existence. If he violates property rights he attacks the sense of security which is one of the pillars supporting social existence. Society views his action with the utmost disapproval and subjects him to serve penalty because it wants to survive. In free India adulteration of foodstuff is a very common experience. It is having a serious effect upon the vitality of the nation and it is steadily undermining its capacity for resistance. It is in fact a more heinous crime than manslaughter. Those who are guilty of this extremely unsocial action may persuade themselves that they have the right to further their own interest, being free people. In such cases the application of law is a necessity for curtailment of their unrestrained liberty in doing offences against the society. The unrestrained use of liberty may also give rise to fights among themselves, revolts and other anti-social activities and the liberty of the community itself may be endangered. Thus on all showing, disrespect for law militates against liberty.

(466 words)

148. "The law is good if a man uses it lawfully"

(WBCS '65)

Law is the expression of the will of the community and its obvious intention is the protection and furtherance of its interests. There can, therefore, be nothing wrong in law if it has been properly formulated in accordance with the wishes of the majority. The reason why law so frequently fails to serve its purpose is that it is inadequately or improperly applied by persons entrusted with the application of the law. It is because human nature is so patently imperfect that a piece of legislation cannot effect the desired improvement. Let us take the case of criminal law. The security of life and property of individuals in a community depends in a large measure upon the proper application of criminal law. When one man, for instance, is murdered by another, it is the duty of the police to track the

criminal and bring him to book, so that no such dastardly crime can be committed in future. If the criminal is apprehended and exemplary punishment is meted out to him his fate surely proves a deterrent to crimes of this nature. The law is there but those charged with its application are sometimes motivated by considerations of personal gain to ignore the crime and allow the criminal to go scotfree. Then society comes to grief not because good laws are wanting but because these laws are not properly applied. We next cite a case where a law which is manifestly good is wilfully misapplied. In a democracy there are laws guaranteeing the right of free expression of opinion. A democracy surely cannot function unless people are permitted to give unfettered expression to what they sincerely feel. But this right of free speech is misapplied when newspapers and journals make scrupulous references to persons in public life with a view to bring them down in public estimation or wilfully give distorted versions of incidents to serve some private end. A good law is thus wrongly applied. Another instance of misapplication of law is provided by indirect taxes such as entertainment tax or the sales tax. These taxes are levied by the Government in order to augment its resources by taking away a part of the huge profits made by cinema companies or tradesmen and spend it for public good. But in the long run, they merely pass it on to the public in the shape of a rise in the prices of tickets for the cinema shows or of the articles purchased by the consumer. Thus a law framed with the intention of doing a benefit to the public ends in adding to the burden it has to bear. In all such instances no fault can be found with the law whose intention is to confer a benefit on the public. The fault in each case is that the law is not applied with strict regard to the intention of the framers of the law. In other words the law is unlawfully applied. (492 words)

144. "If you would have peace, prepare for war"

(WBCS '52)

Or, Preparedness for war is the best security of peace

(CL '63, IAS '72)

It is common experience that a strong man, if he is arrogant

and selfish, does not scruple to prey upon the weak. If he thinks that he can advance his own interest at the expense of a weak man, nothing can stop him from attacking the weak man and overpowering him. But if the weak man prepares himself to face the arrogance of the strong man by suitably strengthening himself and seeking help from his friends, the strong man will think many times before he hazards an attack upon the weak man. Hitler did not hesitate to pounce upon his weak neighbours, but he did not take the risk of invading England because he found her resolutely preparing herself to meet a possible attack. Communist China recently ventured to attack the northern boundaries of India because she saw that India was comparatively unprepared to meet a sudden invasion from her northern neighbour. Now that India has prepared herself to some extent, China in spite of massive concentration of troops on the northern border, is evidently hesitating to launch a second offensive. Till such time comes when all the nations realize the value of non-violence and peaceful co-existence, a policy of preparedness to meet a possible enemy has to be followed by every nation for safeguarding world peace and for avoiding any outbreak of war.

It is the considered opinion of the great statesman of the world that preparation for war minimises the chances of fighting between nations. If a nation is willing to be safe and secure against any attack from another nation then it must always keep a well-trained army ready to face the enemy, as it is weak nation that invites and tempts aggression. The stronger nations often covet the riches of other countries and do not fail to seize any opportunity to pounce upon their weaker neighbours and usurp their rights and liberties by brute force. The more a nation can collect and maintain the army and invent new destructive weapons, the less would be the chance of attack from outside. Even in recent times this doctrine has been amply established. The Americans got the secrets of Atom Bomb and they were further progressing to find out an even more powerful Hydrogen Bomb. This possession of the highest destructive weapon by a single nation against all was causing some disequilibrium in the balance of power and the

world was also in a state of unrest and to some extent at the mercy of that powerful nation ; but as soon as the other nations also got the secrets of that fell weapon and the opposite camp, Russia, even demonstrated the test of Hydrogen Bomb, the possibility of a Third World War was removed.

Preparedness for war is good and unavoidable, but not over-preparedness. A proper limit to war preparations should be observed because all these preparations for war by the maintenance of a standing army, manufacture of war equipments and inventions of powerful missiles of destruction are made at the cost and sacrifice of national wealth and energy. For unequal distribution of natural resources and raw materials, it is not always possible for all the nations to reach the same standard of preparedness. Thus preparedness does not always produce the same desired effect, though the value of it for the purpose of self-defence cannot be underestimated.

Fear of war is still working in the minds of individuals and nations ; and all powers, big and small, are striving for peace by making elaborate preparations for war. So long the world be not peace-minded and the complete disarmament of all nations be not effected, it will be most injudicious for any particular nation or nations to relax or withhold war preparations. If the U. N. is to succeed in enforcing its decisions upon any aggressive country and safeguard world peace, it will have also to possess a strong army of its own.

(650 words)

145. Prospects of a Third World War (WBCS '66)

The story of mankind is the story of bloodshed and meaningless war. The murder of Abel, the second son of Adam and Eve, by his brother Cain, as stated in the Bible, was perhaps the first incident of human bloodshed on earth. Since then profuse blood has been shed and war has been sanctioned in the name of honour, patriotism, biological necessity, survival of the fittest (and so forth and so on. It is against this historical background that we will have to view the prospects of a third world war.

It is barely two decades that the Second World War came

to an end. The conflagration of the last World War was so devastating that it completely unnerved man and led him to seek a peaceful world in which he might move towards a free mankind. This found a practical expression in the foundation of the United Nations Organisation. The primary object of the Organisation is the maintenance of World Peace. But as the years roll by and the sad memories of the last war fade away from the human mind, serious doubts arise whether this easy way of establishing peace will be effective much long. The grounds for entertaining this unhappy fear are the present degradation of this World Body and emergence of such dangerous aphorisms as "preparedness is the best preventive of war".

There are certain factors of a more positive and inexorable kind that make the third World War imminent. Looking at the political chess-board we find that world today is divided into two distinct Power blocs—one headed by the U. S. A. and the other by Soviet Russia. The Communists are eagerly looking forward to a gradual extension of their sphere of influence by slowly indoctrinating other countries with revolutionary communist ideology. On the other hand the capitalist countries realise that the existence of communism is a threat to their highly profitable industrial organisations as well as to their scope for exploiting undeveloped or under-developed countries. They equate communism with the final liquidation of all policies of exploitation. The big armament race between these two blocs is consequent upon these things. Each party professes fear and hatred of the other. Today shooting war on a large scale has ended only to give rise to a cold war between Capitalist and Communist blocs.

The most ominous trend at one time developed in the Far East with a centre in Viet Nam. It was feared that if the crisis would come—as it did in Cuba—the solution would not be very easy, for China with her new atomic potentialities was definitely not ready to go all length for peace as Russia did in recent days, and there were elements in the U. S. A. waiting eagerly for a final show-down.

In spite of all these things the counter-forces against a

global war are not to be underestimated. The Afro-Asian countries with few exceptions are definitely anti-war. Big Powers are not also deaf to the call of peace and the U. N. O. despite all its sad debacles, has achieved some success. Finally the atom-bomb serves as an effective deterrent to the bellicose propensities of those who are war-minded. In all these circumstances war does not seem so certain as has been pointed out time and again. (544 words)

146. Problems of Peace (WBCS '66)

Humanity has moved in the eternal cycle of war and peace ; alternately war dying down in peace and peace dying down in war. But the last two World Wars are especially remarkable for their devastating horror. The conflagration of the last two World Wars has led man to seek a peaceful world in which he might move towards a free mankind. But this has remained an ideal distant dream yet to be achieved. To save the war-weary and badly maimed humanity from the agonies of another war the League of Nations was founded by world statesmen soon after the first World War. But very unfortunately the League soon deteriorated into an extremely useless institution and there was the outbreak of the second World War. Out of the ashes of the second World War the United Nations Organisation (or U. N. O.) was born.

The U. N. O. was the direct result of a large number of nations who longed for peace on earth and felt the necessity of an international body to maintain it. Today's world peace, therefore, depends largely on the effectiveness and importance of this institution. Fortunately for us although the U. N. O. has passed through many vicissitudes and weathered many storms during the last thirty two years no global war has yet started. But the recent trends in the U. N. O. have aroused apprehensions in the minds of many. There is no running away from the fact that if the U. N. O. fails to do things in a just and honourable way the forces of another war are bound to be let loose, for the prospects of a third World War are not altogether absent in the present condition of the world chess-board.

The ground for entertaining this unhappy fear is the division

of the world into two distinct Power blocs. Even before the end of the last World War the difference between Russia and the U. S. A. had begun to spring up and erstwhile the world witnessed the rise of two gigantic Power blocs, one headed by the U. S. A. and the other by Soviet Russia. So at present a cold war between the Power blocs continues and this has lessened the possibility of the shooting war. The attitude of Communist China in this respect is extremely alarming and with her new nuclear potentialities she seems to have been more dangerous than ever. Moreover, China's policy of indoctrinating other countries with revolutionary Communist ideology and providing secret military and other helps to Communist guerillas and rebels in Europe and South East Asia are also fraught with dangers. The failure of the U.N.O. in dealing with highly explosive issues like Vietnam, Kashmir, etc. had in the past receded the hopes of peace.

In spite of all these the prospect of peace is not altogether gloomy. Recent trends in diplomacy have brought the U. S. A. and Soviet Russia very close to each other. The Moscow Test Ban Treaty is a major step to cement the East-West relations. It is a great psychological impetus for both the blocs to discuss and solve many terrifying issues threatening world peace. Moreover, the atom-bomb itself today serves as an effective deterrent to the war-mongers. The lasting peace, however, depends on plain and good intentions of the different countries and the success of the U. N. O. (539 words)

147. War (WBCS '67)
Or. The effects of War on Civilization (WBCS '72)

So much has been written on war, that it is really no use adding further to the war literature, unless one has to say something very original and specific. However, war had always inspired writers and orators in the past. Some of them have even thrown on it romantic gloss.

But today there are very few people in the world who may think that there is really anything romantic about war. The adherents of war may at best justify it by its past record and by reminding us of its ancient origin. But the truth remains

that in view of the horrors and sufferings associated with the war, all admirations for war cool down amazingly.

In civilized countries, when two individuals have a dispute which cannot be resolved among themselves, they go before the judge for a peaceful settlement. It is expected that a similar course would be followed by civilized nations in international quarrels and some progress has been made in this direction of late years by the establishment of the United Nations Organisation. But war is still generally regarded as the only ultimate way of settling national disputes. The armies of great nations are larger than they ever were before in the history of the world, and there seems little prospect of the establishment of the reign of universal peace. Although the principle that might is right no longer prevails in the relations between individuals, it is still considered natural to apply this doctrine when one nation quarrels with another. The progress of modern science leads to the discovery of more powerful instruments for the destruction of human life and property. Attempts have been made of late years, not without success, to diminish the horrors of war by international agreement. Thus the civil population, the wounded soldiers and the hospitals are generally spared from bombing and shelling. But in spite of all such agreements, war, as long as it exists, must produce countless evils. War always paralyses the industry of a country by calling able-bodied men from the field and the factory. Powerful artillery destroys in a few hours buildings that have taken many years to erect. In every war a large number of families are reduced to destitution by the destruction of their property or by the loss of those on whom they depended for support.

A study of post-war European society reveals the terrible impact of a war on society. The post-war Europe is T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land* where there is no pity, no sympathy, no love and no hopes to look forward to. The two World Wars have not only involved ruthless destruction of life and property but of everything that civilization stands for. They have completely disillusioned the world, have reduced to fragments our cherished dreams, have upset the domestic delicacy of our societies, have destroyed our songs, our poetry, our convictions.

Today shooting war on a large scale has ended only to give rise to a cold war between Capitalist and Communist blocs. There is a big armament race between them and each party professes fear and hatred of the other. Finally, the Atom Bomb serves as an effective deterrent to the bellicose propensities of those who are war-minded. Thus although there are border clashes and short wars here and there, the prospect of a third global war is not very imminent. The U. N. O., despite all its sad debacles, has achieved some success in maintaining peace or at least in controlling those short wars.

(578 words)

148. Problems of student unrest in our country

(WBCS '60, '67, '69, IAS '69, CL '67 '73, Misc. 68)

Growing indiscipline among the students has posed a very serious problem to the educational authorities and the general public. Various reasons are adduced for this steady deterioration among our students. First of all, there is a sense of frustration all around caused by a more or less justifiable feeling that the present system of education rarely ensures a future. Political parties are in a large measure responsible for growing indiscipline among the students by exploiting the students for their own ends. Lack of proper facilities for study owing to acute economic distress and shortage of accommodation in schools and in homes are also responsible for diverting the students to extraneous things. While the present need was to develop job-oriented courses of education, the Universities paid very little attention to the planning and introduction of such courses. Another factor which has contributed a lot to creating unrest among students is the deteriorating standards of university administration.

The traditional happy relation between the teacher and the taught has almost disappeared today. The teachers have no heart in their noble work, being the most ill-paid and ill-used section of our people. They are more busy in chasing money and influence in politics and naturally the students receive little from them and they consequently fail to elicit necessary respect and attention. Strikes in schools and colleges have

become of frequent occurrence and most unseemly angry demonstration in examination halls take place almost every year.

Students all over the country have grown restive. Though unrest among the youths is a world-wide phenomena, there is something particularly disturbing about the restlessness of Indian youths. While students abroad are generally creating disturbances in the University campus for bringing about certain reforms or changes in the set-up, their counterparts in India are all agitating on some mere trifles or even political issues of the day, apparently unconnected with their academic pursuits.

Student indiscipline today is visible in all categories of students from University to the primary school and both in urban and rural areas. A flimsy ground is sometimes good enough to provoke them to indulge in open and organised defiance of law. Thus they cause disturbances on railways and other public transport when tickets are demanded, disturb examinations if questions are not within their knowledge, assault invigilators for detecting malpractices, launch strikes against the appointment or removal of teachers and indulge in many other anti-social activities on various pretexts.

For a police-firing somewhere in the remote part of the country, for some peasant agitations within the State, for a bus fare rise or as arrest of the smugglers at the railway station they seem to voice their anger through cracker bursts, incessant strikes or destructive activities. Of course, their direct participation in the politics of the country has been necessitated for winning the seats in the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies in favour of some leaders of progressive parties or some new factions or groups. The recent attacks on educational institutions by Naxalites had, however, nothing to do with the general student unrest.

Our schools and colleges have failed to develop the academic atmosphere and to foster among the students the high sense of responsibility, tolerance and respect for others. Social indiscipline and economic depression and consequent frustration in most of the families also help the growth of indiscipline

and unrest among students. The youths have also no noble ideal to pursue, no heartening prospect to look for.

Unless the root causes are removed no amount of scathing indictment will stem the rising tide of indiscipline among students. There should be some agency which should look into the grievances of students and take steps to remove them with sympathy and understanding. Schools, Colleges and Universities should be reorganized to impart true intellectual, moral and spiritual enlightenment of students. Students' participation in politics should be restricted and a code of conduct for the students should be worked out and the discipline should be strictly enforced. The entire educational system needs thorough overhaul, so that the students may not add the number of unemployed after their studies. The examination system should also be changed so that the results of a single final examination may not be a decisive factor in the formation of one's career.

Students should be made to feel that their future is full of promise. Economic stability should be restored and every one should be assured of equal opportunities and facilities. This will arrest the growth of student unrest in India. (745 words)

149. The Role of Students in Modern India

(CL '72)

After a long period of British rule India became a free country on August 15, 1947. We sometime back celebrated the Silver Jubilee of our independence. But the majority of our people cannot enjoy the political freedom of our motherland because they have to live miserable lives on account of poverty, want and ignorance. The Government has adopted Five-Year Plans to brighten the prospects of our people. But the efforts of the Government are not enough to solve the problems of our country. In view of this position our students should look upon themselves as nation-builders and work wholeheartedly for a bright future. They should fully utilise their student life in studies, so that in future they can prove their worth in diverse needs of the country.

During our struggle for freedom Deshabandhu Chitta

Ranjan Das said : "Education can wait, Swaraj cannot". Now that we have achieved "Swaraj" we should say, "Education cannot wait any more". Indeed education is of great importance in our country because we have accepted a democratic pattern of government. Our young democracy will not be able to attain maturity if we fail to make adequate progress in the sphere of education.

Students of our country as members of a Free Nation should be aware of their duties and responsibilities to their motherland. They are expected to become exponents of Indian culture. They should not imitate the students of western or other foreign countries. They should be inspired with the ideals of our great men like Vivekananda, Netaji, Rabindranath and Mahatma Gandhi. Students should develop their body, mind and character so that they can render useful service to their motherland. They should be free from all sorts of narrow-mindedness and parochialism and should have tolerance to views and faiths of others. Students of our country should know that service to humanity is service to God. Educated men and women of India should consider themselves as dedicated souls.

Now-a-days our students are conscious of their various duties and responsibilities in respect of extra-academic activities. They also organize many welfare activities. But unfortunately such activities are sometimes considered as a part of a political programme. There are many political parties in our country. If all the parties try to form their student wings, our students will lose unity and solidarity. Our students should remember the proverb : United we stand, divided we fall. They may watch the political developments of our motherland with interest but they should not take active part in politics so long they remain as students. (418 words)

150. Should students take part in politics ?

(IAS'70, Misc '75)

The question whether students should participate in politics must be considered in the perspective of their duty towards learning. It is true that the students of Indian Universities,

who are to be the pillars of the future edifice of the nation must be imbibed with a genuine sense of political consciousness and when summoned by the country, should come forward to make the maximum sacrifice. Growth of party spirit, denouncement of political opponents, noisy demonstrations and propaganda, intemperate speeches, forced strikes and hartals are invariably associated with active politics. Thus active participation in politics causes great interference with a student's primary duty of study, and may lead to colossal waste of time and energy in his academic pursuits. Students should not, therefore, take part in active politics.

On the other hand, the students, who are the rising generation and on whom the country pins her confidence, must be inspired with an ever burning patriotic zeal and should be ever prepared to dedicate their lives on the altar of country's freedom. For this purpose they need proper preparation and acquaintance with the elements of politics. Such preparation would include a good general education, a fair knowledge of history, geography, economics, sociology etc and acquaintance with the national and international affairs. Power of debate and forceful presentation of a case and the spirit of service, sacrifice and discipline need be cultivated during student life by those aspiring for the career of a future politician. But active participation in politics would not be suitable for students because they are still immature and inexperienced and are apt to be swayed by passions and prejudices. There is no objection, however, to their passive participation in politics and taking an intelligent interest in politics and studying and discussing political views of his own country as well as other countries. This will enable them to become seasoned politicians in future, if they so choose. (315 words)

151.

Hate Politics

(WBCS '70)

Even a casual look at political activities all over the world will convince a student of political history that there has been a marked tendency towards hatred and violence in place of the earlier conflict of ideas or idealism in the latter part of this century. This has become normal in view of the fact that

political consciousness no longer stands for any disciplined conduct or awareness. It is often a part of the frenzy, generated by an irrational craze for power and influence. Even the world today is not free from such wrangles and spleen.

What is truly unfortunate is that this international development has left a deep scar on India. Even today both within and across her frontiers hatred continues to grow in unseemly proportions to outwit those who are in favour of peaceful solution in human problems. Hence compassion or sympathy is almost out of place in political duels. Since the creation of Pakistan, it deliberately maligns India for her internal political developments and for 'her hungry looks' on the Kashmir Valley. By allowing the hijackers to blow up an Indian plane at Lahore recently, Pakistan has shown her eagerness to whip up a feeling of hatred in her relations with India once again. Despite India's honest efforts at reconciliation, her good gesture of liberal aid to Pakistan for her cyclone-affected people of the eastern wing, the only attitude that Pakistan could adopt towards her neighbour is rank hatred—an inalienable ingredient of hate-politics.

But within the confines of her borders India has been the worst victim of hate-politics in the unhealthy developments in her own political parties in recent months. The Gandhian concept of truth and non-violence has now yielded place to blood-feuds and reckless killing. Personal vendetta, cowardly acts of assault and murder have almost become an accepted principle of party politics in India. The horror of it all is that often the innocent people have to pay the penalty for the cruel designs of unscrupulous politicians. It is not so much the question of implementation of some form of political idealism but intolerance and hatred for the opponents which seem to be gaining upperhand today. Democracy comes to be the ready victim of such irrational exploits. In India in general and in West Bengal in particular, hate-politics has already had a heavy toll of youthful lives and national property. When the dust and the bloodstains that have gathered on the face of our polity disappear, an unholy atmosphere of hatred will slowly

give way to sanity and reasonableness, without which politics becomes a matter of utter futility.

Unlike other countries, we have a large number of political parties, each cherishing hatred for the other parties so much so that whenever any opportunity comes each tries to crush others at any cost. In this struggle for the wrangling of power by any one party, the active members and the younger group are in a fatal game of bloodshed and Statewide violence, terrorism, lawlessness and inhuman atrocities. So the hate politics is well manifest here and unless all the political groups shed this hate element from their politics the future of the country is gloomy. (528 words)

152. Parliamentary Government—its advantages

and disadvantages (WBCS '72, IAS '62, '75)

Democracy, by common consent, appears to be the most ideally suited form of Government in modern times. When properly translated into reality it assumes the parliamentary form because the idea of Athenian democracy is today simply out of date or even impractical. But without the party system there can hardly be any parliamentary democracy. The Parliament comes to be the meeting place of diverse talents elected by the people who debate and discuss various problems facing the country and pass by a majority of votes the necessary legislations or resolutions for the smooth running of the Government. Although it does not ensure direct democracy, it appears to be the most representative form of Government.

The British Government has, beyond doubt, established the great tradition of parliamentary democracy in the world. By maintaining a two-party system it has shown how there can be an ideal form of parliament where the Government is constituted by a party which enjoys the majority, and the other sits in the opposition to offer constructive criticism. It avoids a great deal of unnecessary rivalry and controversy over the passage of the bills and keeps the way open for an alternative Government. Interestingly enough the British form of parliamentary Government retains the Crown as its formal head although it has done away with the evils of monarchy.

It has been criticised by some that in the parliament constiuted of several hundred members, a great majority are indifferent or inefficient and only a few intelligent and active legislators conduct the whole show. Yet, in the absense of any other popular form of Government, in which the people have their say, the parliamentary system seems to be the most acceptable and ideally suited to the well-being of the developing nations. It is true that in several countries in Asia Parliamentary democracy has been replaced by military dictatorship. The results of such upheavals have come to be too apparent to the suffering millions of these developing nations. For nearly a quarter of a century Pakistan has had a number of military dictators to rule the country, who have spurned the parliamentary Government and ruled the masses with sheer brute force. How much blood has been spilled quite unnecessarily, and millions have been butchered and rendered homeless by the military dictator's reckless killing of the innocent and freedom-loving people of Bangedesh, erstwhile eastern wing of Pakistan. But India, her great neighbour, who has consistently upheld the principles of Parliamentary democracy, has come to the rescue of the righteous people of Bangladesh in their darkest hour.

The disadvantages of the Parliamentary system of Government are that the determination of any policy by means of votes is rather difficult and dilatory and in times of emergency no quick decision can be taken. Some safeguards are therefore provided in the Constitution that in cases of emergency arising due to war, external aggression, internal disturbance etc. the Parliamentary system of administration may be temporarily suspended and full powers assumed by the Head of the State. People in general give their votes and are too deeply engrossed their daily occupations to influence their leaders when they abuse the power entrusted to them. The result is corruption, nepotism, party conflicts and moral degeneration in public life. Capitalism also thrives in all democracies, because it has money and power to control and influence the public opinion. But still the Parliamentary Government is the best form of Government as in that system every member of the society may feel

as equals and has freedom to criticise the Government, which is totally banned in Dictatorial regimes and in Socialist countries. (600 words)

153. Use and abuse of Nuclear Power

(WBCS '63, 66, Misc '74, IAS '51)

The dangerous potentialities of nuclear power were first revealed to the world when the prosperous cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan were blasted out of existence by atomic bombs in August 1945. Since then more and more powerful weapons of atomic bombs, hydrogen bombs, rockets and guided missiles have been discovered and it is certain that in the event of the outbreak of a Third World War, during which lethal weapons will be employed on a wide scale, the whole earth will be reduced to a heap of ruins. The scientists are unanimous that the atomic "fall outs" following the tests cause radio-activity and contaminate wide areas around with far-reaching biological effects.

This fear of self-annihilation or extinction of the human race has led man to think of banning the nuclear weapons and cannalising the mighty atomic energy for peaceful purposes. This nuclear power made it possible for the American submarines *Nautilus* and *Skate* to sail successfully under the Polar ice-cap and this has also helped much in Space explorations.

Nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes are essentially needed in solving the energy crisis of the non-oil-producing countries and serving as an alternative source of power when the fuel resources of the world are fast dwindling. Atomic explosions can be used for underground engineering and excavations, seismic measurement and exploitation of geothermal energy sources and in modifying topography. Atomic power is efficiently utilised in measuring wear in engines and tyres, studying the causes of corrosion, tracing the flow of liquids through pipelines and measuring thickness of plastic films, paper, rubber, tin and steel etc. by atomic radiation. Nuclear radiation is also applied in plant physiology and animal husbandry and radio-active isotopes are used as *tracers* as well as in the treatment of cancer, tumour, blood disorders

and other diseases. Atomic era is full of potentialities and many new advantages are yet to be explored. (314 words)

154. India's achievements in nuclear and space sciences

(WBCS '75)

Indian scientists made notable contribution to different branches of science in the preceding centuries. In the twentieth century India is keeping stride with the scientifically advanced countries through various organizations and institutes of scientific research. In this connexion particular mention should be made of the Atomic Energy Commission of India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, was instrumental in establishing this Commission.

In recent times India has produced some eminent scientists. Dr. H. N. Sethna, the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, is a brilliant scientist. His illustrious predecessors Dr. Vikram Sarabhai and Dr. H. J. Bhabha made notable contributions to nuclear science. Since the establishment of the Department of Atomic Energy, research and development in the peaceful uses of atomic energy made rapid strides. India's three nuclear research reactors are in operation, a nuclear fuel complex has been established and four atomic power stations are under construction. Still none in the world ever dreamt that India would acquire the know-how of exploding a nuclear device.

India became a member of the nuclear club by exploding her first nuclear device, an underground plutonium nuclear device, using implosion technique on May 18, 1974. The explosion occurred at Pokhran in the Rajasthan desert. The blast was estimated to be of 10 to 15 kilotons. As a result of the blast an artificial hill was created on the site. The hill was later described as the "most beautiful sight which came on the skyline from nowhere". The blast also formed a crater at the site. But there was almost complete absence of radio-active fall-out.

India's underground nuclear implosion of May 18, 1974 is a great achievement on the part of Indian nuclear scientists. It reinforced the international respect for the technical skill of

the Indian Atomic Energy Commission, which has a tradition of technical innovation in nuclear energy comparable with that of many European countries. It is interesting to consider some significant facts about the spectacular implosion. Firstly, India exploded her first nuclear device only after four years' research. Secondly, no foreign scientist was associated with it. It was a purely Indian project. Thirdly, an incredibly low amount of money was spent on this project. It cost only about thirty lakhs of rupees. All these facts go to prove that India's claim of having the capacity to produce a nuclear bomb was not an empty boast.

There has been mixed reaction to India's first nuclear implosion. America, Britain, Canada, Japan and Pakistan have talked of adverse impact of the experiment on world stability. China has kept her fingers crossed. But Russia, France and Yugoslavia have hailed India's effort and warmly welcomed her entry into the nuclear club. The Indian Prime Minister and other important leaders have repeatedly declared that India's nuclear implosion has no military relevance. The commendation of Indian nuclear scientists' ingenuity in harnessing atomic energy for developmental purposes is contained in a world-wide study of nuclear capacity of different nations published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies of London.

In the year 1975 the Indian scientists made some contribution to space sciences. They have launched "Aryabhata" into space with Russian collaboration. We are aware that our space scientists are busy in carrying on valuable researches and experiments. We hope that the day is not far off when Indian space scientists will send rockets into space from Indian soil without taking any help from foreign scientists. (554 words)

155. The Press in Free India (WBCS '49)

The Press is called the 'fourth estate' because it wields a great power and influence on the people and the government and is an indispensable part of our social life now-a-days. The long-cherished freedom of the Press has now been attained in India and the Fundamental Rights guaranteed by the Constitution of India provide Freedom of Speech or Expression,

which includes freedom of the Press as well. Of course, unrestricted freedom is not possible and so some limitations have been drawn by the Press Act, which regulates publication of any objectionable or indecent matter or any matter designed to overthrow the government by violent or subversive activities, to create hatred among classes of citizens, to undermine the administration of law and the like. With the freedom of India higher responsibilities have devolved on the Press of India, which now holds the same elevated position as those of other progressive democratic countries.

The daily newspaper contains not only news but also views on many things. Since the great majority of the people do not think independently, they are guided and influenced by the opinions of the particular paper or papers which they habitually read. and thus the Press also serves as the conscience of the people. Behind each daily newspaper, there is a political party whose views and ideas it advocates and thus it influences political affairs and the minds of the people. It is the most powerful organ of the propaganda and can make or mar the career of any statesman or leader or association. Its power is well manifested at the time of election of representatives.

Competitions between newspapers may sometimes degenerate into personal attacks and they may stoop low due to recklessness or bribing. The Press may also injure the international interest or relationship with foreign powers through unscrupulous distribution of news and views and may indulge in malicious attacks upon the administration, association or individual. The daily newspaper does not always represent the healthy views of the people of the society. This sort of freedom of the Press cannot be tolerated in the interest of the country. The duty of the Press, therefore, rests in publishing only the well-verified, true and unbiased news and their views with an impartial outlook. Of course, it has every liberty to offer healthy criticisms and constructive suggestions for proper running of the administration of the country.

Besides circulation of the news, the Press also educates the mass and makes them conscious of their rights and duties, of civic senses and public morality and also popularizes new ideas

and beliefs. With the spread of literacy, circulation of newspapers will rapidly increase. In recent years, there has been rapid development in the working of the Press and a number of news agency has been formed all over the world for quick presentation of the news of anything happening at the remotest corner of the world. The Central and State Governments of India also maintain departments or branches for Press Information and Publicity. Journalism is now being taught in various Universities as a respectable vocational subject. Thus in all respects, the Press now plays a very important role in free India.

(526 words)

156. The duties and responsibilities of a Journalist

(WBCS '73, Misc '72)

A modern newspaper office is a world in itself. A modern newspaper must have on its staff editors, staff-reporters, correspondents, artists, cartoonists, advertisement managers, printing managers, photographers and cartographers. All these people who are on the staff of a newspaper are generally called journalists, and their profession is journalism. Newspapers have been popular in all countries of the world since the invention of the printing press. At present we have a large number of newspapers in our country. Nowadays a newspaper is not merely a supplier of news ; it is a rich storehouse of current information and public opinions. A journalist's work is not an easy one. He has to write daily and to write for busy people catching trains in the morning as well as tired people coming home in the evening. He has also to serve diverse tastes. The merit of the journalist and reporter is determined by their ability to scoop the secret news of the administration, to analyse correctly the significance of international affairs and to unearth corruptions and conspiracies that might endanger the country's security. The work of a journalist consists in gathering news from various sources and commenting on them and presenting them to the public in an interesting manner. This is not an easy task.

A journalist attached to a modern newspaper has many duties. Of course, his first duty is to be truthful and fearless.

He may be tempted to add colour to truth ; but he should never distort truth. A journalist should be a fearless man. He is required to interview powerful politicians, administrators, trade union leaders, industrialists and popular musicians, artistes and players. When he approaches powerful men for information and opinion, he may receive rebuffs and retorts from them. But this should not dishearten him. During an emergency in the country his task will become more difficult, but he must courageously perform his duty to his countrymen by giving them true news.

A journalist should be free from politics. If he indulges in party politics, his views will become prejudiced. This is undesirable. The journalist should remember that a man who believes in the ideology of a particular political party cannot give true news. He should never contract the habit of giving the views of any political party as his own.

A journalist is a critic of the government of his country. It is his duty to attack the wrong policies of the government but his criticism should be healthy. He should give a commentary on proceedings of the Parliament and Legislative bodies. He has to impartially judge the speeches and performances of ministers and political leaders. A journalist is also a critic of the society. He should be a bitter critic of corruption in the society. He has to mercilessly expose social evils and indicate the lines along which society should progress. The health of the society depends on the performance of the journalist to some extent.

In a democratic country a journalist has great responsibilities towards the society. Democracy is government of the people, by the people and for the people. A democratic government depends on honest public opinion. It is the journalist who enlightens the people about the policies of the government. Success of democracy depends largely on the activities of the journalist.

Newspapers have become a part of modern life. They nourish democratic governments. As more and more countries adopt democratic ways of life, journalism will flourish and the duties and responsibilities of the journalist will increase. The

long-standing grievances of the local people or the malpractices of some influential groups can be removed effectively if a journalist takes on the matter. A journalist is respected everywhere and he enjoys several special privileges at home and abroad.

(620 words)

157. The Role of the Newspaper in Modern India

(CL '53, '67)

Or, The power of the Press

(WBCS '72)

In the ancient world the King-makers were very often the shrewd priests or the crafty courtiers. They could dislodge the old monarch and set up a new dynasty. Times have changed since then and the modern king-maker is seldom any such person, he is scarcely an individual at all; more often, he yields place to the Press, which is called the 'fourth estate' because it wields a great power and influence on the Government in democracy and is an indispensable part of our social life now-a-days.

Representing the voice of the people, the press comes to be the most effective organ in democracy. It upholds the rights of the people and ventilates their grievances. Under the pressure of the public opinion created by the newspapers the unruly ruler of the unwanted Government often bows down or even bows out of office. The authority can seldom afford to be indifferent to the news or views disseminated by the Press. How often, by drawing attention to the loopholes or drawbacks of the Government, newspapers have forestalled many a crisis in the civic or political life of a nation. By unearthing a series of secret reports of the American Government did not Jack Anderson of the New York Times recently put a brake on the disastrous course adopted by the Nixon administration ?

The moulding influence that the Press in a democratic country exercises over the people is, undoubtedly, quite decisive. Newspapers feed the people with information, give them a direction in public life, even offer them incitement, at times, to goad them on to action. Hence the power of the Press can be occasionally alarming, or disproportionate to the cause of the people. It can serve them right, and even perversely.

sely, if the power enjoyed by it is not restrained by the vigilance of the reading public. When the Press is controlled by political parties, it can easily sway the opinion of the people and help the political organisation to sweep the polls. Hence the free Press also calls for disinterested and unattached journalism.

But the Press also makes inroads on the social and ethical norms of the people. Various views and information on diverse aspects of social life published in the newspapers greatly influence the mind of the readers who often act up to them. The yellow Press, that is newspapers supplying sensational news and reports to the readers, has quite a degrading effect on the sensitive youths of the country, who are usually carried off their feet by the 'explosive' articles which are motivated by purely commercial interests.

It is the most powerful organ of the propaganda and can make or mar the career of any statesman or leader or association. Its power is well manifested at the time of election of representatives. The Press may also injure the international interest or relationship with foreign powers through unscrupulous distribution of news and views and may indulge in malicious attacks upon the administration, association or individual.

Even the state-owned Press of a totalitarian country can be too powerful to do any good to people. By publishing only carefully screened news articles it can keep the truth out of the reader's reach. It can easily whip up frenzy among people by providing them with partisan views or cleverly got up news and by encouraging fanaticism and warped ideas, it can prove to be a dangerous power. So the people of a country must maintain an eternal vigil on the power of the Press.

(583 words)

158.

Censorship

(WBCS '69)

With the dawning of the moral sense in man some form of external check on the activities of artists has been enforced everywhere. In almost every country there is a responsible body to serve as mentors of public morals in the field of literary and artistic activities. The purpose of this body is to act as watchdogs on the literary productions, films and works of art.

In modern times film censorship has come to be a regular feature of the corporate life of people. As the most effective mass media films are subjected to strict scrutiny by a responsible body before they are released for distribution. Some films are cut down to a certain length because the censors find something obscure in them. But there are differences in tastes and standards just as there are differences in national outlook. What is obscure to one may be a common thing to another. In every country there are Boards of Film Censors. The Board classifies films into three categories, universal suitability indicated by 'U'; more suitable for adult audiences by 'A'; for adults only, children under sixteen being excluded by 'X'. The permission to exhibit the films rests on these classifications, obscene or immoral scenes being dropped out of them. Of course censorship is here synonymous with legal restrictions or banning.

Control of printed or spoken words dates back to the early Christian eras. Books considered pernicious to faith or morals were subjected to censorship by the early Church. This power continues to be exercised in the Roman Catholic Church on the recommendation of Bishops. The Crown in England long exercised its monopolistic power of restricting printing to protect itself from attacks, with the growth of printing all over the country. In every country there are provisions of law for banning the published books on grounds of blasphemy, sedition or obscenity according to some norms of the country. Only quite recently we had the controversial judgment on D. H. Lawrence's 'Lady Chatterley's Lover' and Vladimir Novikov's 'Lolita' which were formerly banned. In our country authors of obscene books are subjected to legal punishment. The furore over 'Prajapati' and 'Patak' by Samresh Bose has hardly died down.

In times of emergency or War, censorship of the Press comes to be of the foremost importance because of the considerations of military and national security. Defence regulations necessitate the banning of the publication of news on the exact movements of the troops, naval vessels, aircrafts, the exact position and strength of the military bases or such other infor-

mation of military importance. Of course, the editors of news-papers in a country co-operate voluntarily for the security of their country. Restrictions on all postal and telegraphic communications both incoming and outgoing are imposed during the war to prevent leakage of news to the enemy. Political censorship of the Press has always been a characteristic feature of countries under totalitarian rule. There the Press is brought directly under the control of the State and the freedom of the Press, a mighty instrument of democracy, is thoroughly gagged. Recently in Czechoslovakia, under the pressure of the U. S. S. R. the local Press has been brought under the regulations of censorship again. It shows how censorship can keep an iron curtain around the country and isolate it from the extraneous influences. (548 words)

159. The heritage of India's struggle for freedom

(Misc. '76)

The memory of our pre-independence days is at once a horror and an inspiration. Revolutionaries at every nook and corner were bent on freeing the motherland from the foreign yoke at any cost and sacrifice, and policemen and spies at every post attempted to foil their noble efforts. Many a move thus ended in smoke, many a life lost, the day of independence was delayed and delayed but the struggle did not lose its edge. Independence was the people's goal, was the breath and blood of their being, their days' thought and nights' dream. They could see their mother chained, with tears trickling down her cheeks and they renewed their fight. Thus we find thousands of martyrs like Kshudiram, Bhagat Singh, Bagha Jatin and Netaji.

Today, that freedom is attained. And it is time now to pause and think what we have gained, what we have learnt, in short, what is the heritage of India's grim and bloody battle for freedom.

We have gained a tremendous spirit—the spirit of sacrifice, the spirit of endurance that made us pass through that phase of terrorism and repression. The patriotism that burned in the hearts of all Indians made way for national integration.

We have learnt that above everything else, we are Indians after all and that nothing is impossible to a man of strong will and determination. We have also learnt to be on our guard against all divisions and dissensions amongst different sects, groups and parties.

Let the love of our motherland, that sweet fruit of our freedom struggle, burn bright in all our hearts. Let it remind us ever that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," that we must be ever-watchful to guard our land both from external aggressions and from internal feuds. We shall also help building up a prosperous country worthy of its name in all respects. (310 words)

160. The rights and duties of the youth in modern India

(Misc. '76)

The youth in modern age are in general opposed to the prevailing order and set-up. They look up to the old generation as worn-out and useless and claim a right to stand against everything. They are rebels against all forms and figures, statutes and institutions which seem to breed corruption and selfishness, tyranny and oppression. They suffer from a spirit of irreverence and disobedience and often show disrespect and discourtesy to elders and seniors. The youth are apt to leadership be that in school or college committees, in local committees or in political fields. They lecture on the futility of present examination system, clamour for employment opportunities and stage demonstrations and strikes on any issue whatever. And yet as they have no tolerance to other's views and statements, their participation in different committees and organisations often ends in chaos.

As to the rights they have the freedom of speech and movement and leadership in schools, colleges, local committees, playgrounds and in social services. The youth often clamour for right of representation in the working of academic and administrative machinery.

The youth, however, must not be forgetful of obligations. Their first duty is to be loyal and obedient to the laws of the land, be respectful to the Constitution, national flag and the

national anthem, to preserve the rich heritage of nation's composite culture and safeguard public property and abjure violence. They should develop themselves as worthy citizens. They must pay their taxes and fares and build up their characters. They should volunteer themselves, regardless of personal gains, to eradicate illiteracy, improve sanitation, root out evils and corruption from the society and create better and healthier living conditions. Cooperation should be their watchword.

If the youth of modern India become mindful of both rights and duties and choose to profit by the wisdom of the old, India is sure to be proud of them. (313 words)

(i) MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

161. "To thine ownself be true" (WBCS '50)

Or, Know then thyself presume not God to scan.

The proper study of mankind is man. (IAS '64)

This is an oft-quoted line from Shakespeare, which runs as follows —

"To thine ownself be true :
And it must follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not be false to any man."

It means that a man can deceive the whole world but not his own conscience, which is always awake to strike note of warning whenever he is about to do something bad. Self-deception is the root of all vices. He who poses to be what he is not is a hypocrite and by his duplicity may deceive the common people, but he who puts forth false arguments in justification of his misdeeds before his own conscience is a greater hypocrite. Whatever wrong is done, is done by impulse and sentiments in defiance of the voice of conscience. Man is sure to overcome all the trials of his life, if he remains true to himself and that is why self-examination is necessary. It guards against a number of pitfalls and points out if the canons of morality and truth are being violated.

A man who is true to himself is true to others and conversely who is true to others cannot be untrue to his ownself. Truth is the highest glory that the human heart should seek to attain. A true man is always respected and is often regarded for his goodness. He enjoys the confidence of others and upholds an ideal life to be followed by others. If along with self-examination, self-discipline and self-control can be developed, many of our activities can be regulated and directed towards the welfare of the mankind. The cowards and villains are afraid of self-examination. Self-criticism makes a man frank, brave and resolute. A good man always criticises his own doings and hears the voice of his conscience in distinguishing between rights and wrongs, and follows the path of truth.

A man who is true to himself acquires self-reliance and can boldly face all eventualities in his life. Those who are true to themselves and whose trust in themselves is well-grounded, would gain honour in the eyes of the world and even if they fail, they are spurred on to renewed efforts by the conviction that they would succeed another time. He, who has not the courage to be true to himself, is a timid wretched fellow, most hated by all. The truthfulness to one's ownself develops one's conscience, which approves or condemns one's actions and thus directly or indirectly one's all activities. (416 words)

162. "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control.

These three alone lead life to sovereign power"

WBCS 50)

This means that sovereign power is gained by the possession of knowledge of and confidence in one's ownself and control over evil desires, passions, prejudices and such other shortcomings. The three-fold self-discipline or the harmonious development of moral, intellectual and physical qualities is the fountain spring of power. Man is nothing but a bundle of passions, prejudices, aspirations, self-interests and a number of vices and unless these are well regulated and controlled, he is sure to pave the path of his ruin. Man is superior to animals in that he can control his impulses and desires. A man who can control himself is able to trust himself and from this comes

the spirit of self-reverence ; that is, he can love and revere his ownself which again is possible only when he is true to his own conscience. Thus a man who has self-reverence upholds such a perfect life that others are sure to follow him as an ideal. Knowledge is power and as soon as a man acquires knowledge he gains power, both physical and spiritual. A successful man should have thorough knowledge of his ownself, of his own capacity and capability, so that he may not venture too much nor he may be cowardly. With the development of knowledge, moral and spiritual powers are also developed and we can understand one another and can respect one another's feelings, sentiments and opinions. A man who acquires mastery of the knowledge of his ownself is respected by all. Of all the restraints, self-restraint or self-control is the highest type of control as it is not imposed from without by the threat of consequences or punishment or fear of public opinion, but it is achieved through greater sacrifice, nobler attainments and higher ideas of duties. Thus any man who has all the three virtues of self-reverence, self-knowledge and self-control commands an unbounded power and is the fittest person to be the leader of mankind in every branch of life and thought."

Self-examination guards us against a number of pitfalls and if along with self-examination, self-discipline and self-control can be developed, many of our activities can be regulated and directed towards the welfare of the mankind. The cowards and villains are afraid of self-examination. Self-criticism makes a man frank, brave and resolute. A good man always criticizes his own doings and hears the voice of his conscience in distinguishing between rights and wrongs and follows the path of truth.

(409 words)

168. Nothing could be more destructive of character or warping to vitality than a long course of abnegation and sacrifice (WBCS '60)

Sacrifice or self-denial has often been extolled as a noble virtue. History is replete with examples of sacrifice of one's self for the good of others. "None has come to the world to remain worried about himself ; We are all for all others, each

for all", says the Bengali poet. It appeals to us as a gem of noble principle of life.

Sacrifice implies abnegation or self-denial. Its object may be two-fold,—good of others and good of one's ownself. Self-denial for the good of others leads to one's moral and spiritual uplift. But self-sacrifice has its limit. Charity is a virtue within certain bounds. It must be remembered that a person has his duty to himself as he has to others. "To thy ownself be true" is a valuable injunction to be obeyed in life. This does not imply abject selfishness.

Abnegation must not be carried too far and observed too long. Moderation and occasional restrictions contribute to physical and mental well-being, but continuous abnegation is detrimental to body and mind. To stint oneself of the good things of life in pursuance of some false principle betrays a cynical frame of mind. Prolonged penance on religious grounds is often looked upon as an ennobling and purifying act. A well-timed fast may be better than a cure, but if a fast is observed too long, it is bound to weaken and impair health. A sound mind in a sound body is essential for intellectual and spiritual advancement.

"Charity begins at home" is an age-old saying having profound import. One must be good and true to himself in order to be so to the world. It is not for nothing that God has been so bounteous in respect of the good things He has given us. To turn away from the joy of life, to brood and pine in self-imposed penance is going against Nature and life itself. Strength of mind and character cannot be attained if the body is weak and unsound. Vitality depends on nourishment from proper food and normal way of life. Abnegation is an abnormality which interferes with proper functioning of our physical being and in turn weakens our character and warps our intellectual faculties. To deny oneself the normal needs of life from a false sense of sacrifice is thus doing injustice to oneself and defying the law of Nature.

A man who has plenty may resort to occasional self-denial to share what he has with the have-nots, but if this is carried to excess it becomes a crime. Inordinate abnegation has its

retribution in the form of deterioration of mental and physical capacities and is thus a serious handicap to all progress.

Man is a ceaseless fighter. He must fight against the forces of Nature and the numerous odds of life. A fighter needs physical and mental strength to keep up his fight, (so that he may not go down under the stress of things. God's good earth provides the sources of man's strength to be useful to himself and to those with whom he lives. (513 words)

164.

Time

(WBCS '57, IAS '73)

What we call 'time' is that part of Eternity which is within human cognition, comprising the past, the present and the future. Time and life are eternal and co-existent. Time is often likened to a river. Both flow on ceaselessly and know no pause.

Hence we are often reminded of the common adage 'Time and tide wait for none'. The analogy is particularly significant, since like the current of a river time flows on without tarrying or turning back a while. 'Time is also described as an "old gipsy man" with a lock of hair in front of the head and bald behind. Thus we have the Biblical saying "Catch Time by the forelock, for when once past there is no recalling it". This implies that time is of immense value in the sense that we cannot get back what we lose of it.

Life is activity ; mere breathing is not life. Human activity depends on utilisation of time in a variety of efforts in life. So, the value of time is incalculable, not only because a minute missed is a minute lost, but also because the time allotted to man is all too brief. Man has to do much and know much during the short span of his earthly existence. He cannot, therefore, afford to let slip a single moment or misuse a single fraction of the precious years of his life.

This brings in the question of use and abuse of time. Procrastination, it is said, is the thief of time, so are idleness and misuse as well. Time spent in idleness slips away and time misused is wasted. Time is thus lost for ever. God has made man in His own image and has endowed him with heavenly virtues.

'Work is worship' is an oft-repeated saying. God desires that man should work in order to make the fullest use of the powers he has received from Him, not only for one's own good but for good of all. Work in this sense naturally denotes useful work which is conducive to physical, moral and spiritual well-being, and not frittering away energy in useless or harmful activity.

'Life is short, art is long'. Knowledge is limitless, very little has been brought within human ken despite all endeavours from age to age. Thus the value of time is inestimable. Success depends on work and work depends on time. 'Time is money' is a trite saying. Worldly success is often measured in terms of money. One has to learn to earn, to strive to achieve. Success never comes unsought like a windfall. Every achievement has behind it hours devoted to efforts.

To put off work and not to do a thing at the right time rob us of precious hours from day to day. Inordinate faith in one's abilities often makes him idle away the present in the hope of making up the loss in the future which may, in its turn, elude him. We must work in the 'living present' and trust no future however bright the prospect may appear. It is vain to brood over what might have been done and to dream of what may be done, for the past is gone for good and the future may prove a phantasy.

The hours, days, months and years which we have at our disposal and happen to be within the range of our knowledge, are what we call time. It is passing, it is elusive, flowing onward like a stream to the "great deep" of eternity. Nothing avails to "look before and after and pine for what is not". The present is within grip and must be fully utilised. "He alone is great who by a life heroic conquers fate". (619 words)

165. Greatness consists in bringing all manners of mischief upon mankind, and Goodness in removing it from them (WBCS '61)

The difference between greatness and goodness is sometimes overlooked. It is assumed that all greatness results in definite good to humanity whereas the truth is, sometimes, the reverse.

Instead of benefiting mankind, great men, at times, have done incalculable injury to human society. This can be readily understood if we recall the career of some of the great men in history. Julius Caesar is a proud name. But he did little more than bringing misery and destitution to millions of human beings by his conquests. The same was the case with men like Alexander and Chengiz Khan. They flashed across the stage of life in a blaze of glory. They wielded tremendous power over countless men and forced them to carry out their will. But when we try to assess their contribution to human welfare and progress we are disappointed. They only succeeded in heaping misery on human beings and did little to wipe away tears from their eyes. We can refer to the recent case of Hitler in this connection. He will surely be regarded as one of the great men in history. His magnetic power over hordes of men, his organisational ability which was able to revitalise a decadent Germany, surely render him worthy of the title. But instead of bringing relief to a suffering human heart, he turned a great part of Europe into shambles and brought indescribable sufferings to countless homes. This has been the balance-sheet of greatness in not a few cases.

But a good man never cares to make a figure in the world. He prefers a quiet life and feels happy if he can be of some service to his fellowmen. He would rather efface himself than be the instrument of inflicting miseries on others. He would never push himself into the limelight and strive for honour and position. He would welcome suffering and pain in his personal life if by doing so he can help assuage the sufferings of others. It is this spirit that animates all really good men ; they wear a crown of thorns so that others may be happy. Such people have frequently to undertake the task of clearing the mess created by the ambitions of great men. In the Gita, Srikrishna says that whenever there is decline of religion and triumph of unreason He takes up a new incarnation. Perhaps God works through these good men to undo the evil that results from the ruthless ambitions of great men. In our own times we have had a good example of this, Mohammad Ali Jinnah will surely be counted as one of the great men in history. It is his

insane two nation theory that ultimately led to the partition of the country and fratricidal quarrels that turned parts of northern India into a veritable slaughter-house during the early days of the Partition. Then it fell to the lot of that good man Gandhiji to heal the sores caused by the fratricide. He toured the affected places and in his own way went on quietly exhorting the two communities to live peacefully with each other. The picture of the aged man on his lonely trek to achieve communal harmony will be well remembered. He also achieved martyrdom in quest of the Nation's welfare. Thus, age after age, good men have paid with their lives and sufferings for the reckless ambitions of great men.

565 words

166. "Great wits are sure to madness near allied"

WBCS '65

In every society there is an accepted code of behaviour and a person who infringes that code is generally regarded as a crank or an eccentric person. This assessment is without any exception so far it relates to persons of average talent. But there is a class of people, men and women of extra-ordinary talent or genius, whose behaviour sometimes does not conform to our notion of propriety. In common parlance they may be described as mad, but they are unconcerned with the comments and criticisms around. They move in a world of abstract thought far away from the normal day-to-day life and are so much occupied with their own pursuits oblivious of their surroundings, that their conduct would strike an on-looker as unconventional. They do not care what dress they wear and what food they eat so long as these do not come in the way of their favourite pursuits. It is nothing unusual for an erudite Professor to appear before his students in an out-landish garb or a scientist of talent to go on research for days without food. While the students laugh at the Professor in their sleeves, the unconcerned Professor goes on with his lecture as if they were amused by his good speech. The unmindful sage has been the butt of innocent fun both in history and

legend. There is a story about the great scientist Einstein that once during a visit to Paris he lost his way and could not get back to his hotel till another person pointed out that he was standing just in front of that hotel. This behaviour is very near allied to madness. History tells the famous story of Archimedes who was so much elated by his discovery that he ran naked through the streets to apprise the King of what he had discovered. If any other person behaved in a similar manner he would have exposed himself either to law's penalty or to confinement in a mental hospital. But scientists are treated with tolerance because they live in a world of abstract thought removed from the sordidness of day-to-day life and their absorption in such thoughts often results in far-reaching good to humanity. Sometimes, however, this absorption and the resultant forgetfulness of surroundings ended in tragedy. This is illustrated by the manner in which Archimedes met his death. He was helping the King of Syracuse to defend the city against Roman invaders by devising mechanical contrivances and was so much absorbed in a mathematical problem that a Roman soldier could come leisurely unnoticed by him and kill him. The story of the astronomer who was so very much absorbed in the observation of heavenly bodies that he did not notice a ditch full of water in front and therefore got drowned also illustrates the danger that a man of unusual talents has to face sometimes for being careless of his surroundings. There are many such illustrations which prove that great wits often pose very near madness. (498 words)

167. As civilization advances poetry declines

(WBCS '53, '62, '66, IAS '67)

The statement seems to assert a hostility between civilization and poetry. The advancement of civilization certainly suggests the advancement of scientific explorations and the statement means to convey that the development of science and technology is highly detrimental to the interest of poetry. There is no doubt some truth in this statement so far as epic poetries are

concerned. For, after the four great epics—the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Iliad and the Odyssey—no other epic, in the true sense of the term, has been produced. The reason is that in the early stages of man's history, he was simple and unsophisticated and his mind readily responded to the wonderful variety of the world around him. He was young in experience and was ready to be surprised by unexpected facets of beauty almost at every turn. With so much to fill his mind with wonder and awe, it was only natural that he should have expressed himself in the language of poetry. There was a great deal of leisure and very little to distract his mind from its favourite pursuits. But as civilization advances all these circumstances are disappearing fast. Hardly anything impinges on his mind with an impact violent enough to stir the depths of his consciousness. He has grown callous by his accumulated experience. Besides, he has lost the freshness of mind and with it the capacity to respond to external stimuli. Life has grown far too complicated and the average person has to live his life in a round of distraction that leave him little time for perception of beauty.

The incredible achievements of science and technology in recent years have turned men's thoughts to further conquest of Nature for, by this alone, it seems to him that he can increase his happiness and well-being. Formerly, Nature was looked upon as an inexhaustible source of beauty and peace. It was little wonder that she was an endless source of inspiration to poets and myths were woven round her. But man is now more interested in analysing her process and finding out her laws, than in her external appearance, however, alluring. This altered relation between man and his surroundings is bound to lead to the decline of Nature-poetry and this is what has inevitably taken place in recent times.

But it is said that poetry results from a condition of mind and does not depend on a particular attitude to the external world. Whatever be the stimulus, if its impact on the mind is powerful enough it is sure to result in poetry. Formerly there was only a limited number of subjects about which it was thought that poetry could be written. Some subjects were tabooed. But now the scope of poetry has been immeasurably

extended. Even so, it has to be admitted that the poetry written about these new subjects has the wide appeal of its predecessor. It is not easy to predict about the future. But so far as things have shaped themselves at present it cannot be gainsaid that the progress of scientific civilization has been accompanied by an undoubted decline of poetry.

Though there may not be lack of poets today, but there is a great lack of poetry. Makers of poetry have been engrossed into the whirl of mechanized and civilized living. That spacious quiet, that freedom and leisure, in which inspiration may be cultivated is now wanting. It is not paying and it does not also appeal to the heart of the general mass. Men of today find no time to go deep into the poetic feelings and thus the poetry and makers thereof get no appreciation, not to speak of the reward. The advance of scientific spirit in the present day civilization thus marks the inevitable decadence of the poetic temper and creation of the beautiful and the joyful in human life.

(642 words)

168.

Art for art's sake

WBCS '66

The cult of art for art's sake, that is the view that art is devoid of any social, moral or political contents, is part of the sharp reaction that swept over England immediately after the Industrial Revolution. In the previous centuries the function of art was either to teach or to please. But the new movement came to assert that art exists for its own sake and its justification must be sought in something apart from its effects on the human mind.

The ancient idea was that art was the limitation of life. That is, whatever happened in life was to be imitated in literature if that was necessary to build up the character therein. But the present idea is that art has its own intrinsic value, that is to infuse joy and pleasure in the minds of the reader or the on-looker, and for this art need not be a true replica of the life on earth. The art may be suggestive or even imaginative. The perfection of a work of art, therefore, depends on the extent to which the formal expression has been able to approximate to the Abstract Idea. This approximation towards

perfection is to be achieved for no ulterior object but for art itself.

On analysis it is found that this theory attaches greater importance to the form than to the idea ; to the sensual rather than to the moral and intellectual apprehension of the idea. Consequently it has led to the most undesirable development by exaggerating artificiality and a certain impersonality in attitude. The post-war France has thus witnessed the development of exotic schools of painting—schools like the cubist which represent human forms in geometrical figures.

It need not be emphasised here that expression becomes lifeless when it is viewed apart from its object, for if there is no healthy co-ordination between the artist and those who view his art, the expression is bound to be cold and mechanical. If art is an interpretation and representation of life, its essential greatness must ultimately be judged by the greatness of the power with which it handles life's greatest and most abiding things—the things which belong to our highest experiences and interests. It is true, art must be estimated with respect to its purely artistic or technical features. But this consideration must not blind us to the fact that all art is after all an embodiment of spirit and a vehicle of thought and feeling, and that it is from the character of the spirit, thought and feeling which it expresses that it derives its substantial value. The cult of art for art's sake seems to concern only the minor and dilettante artists. The really great artists of the world have never taken any note of it. They have always recognised that art is always made out of life, belongs to life and exists for life and it is by their grasp of life and power of interpreting it that their greatness may in large measure be explained.

: 503 words)

169. "To commercialise art is to debase it"—Discuss.

(WBCS '56)

To put works of art to commercial use is to relegate them to the category of utility goods, the value of which is determined by financial profit and loss. The function of a true artist is to give expression to his sense of beauty and joy, through literary

compositions, painting or music. He does not make a conscious effort to cater to popular taste. A writer who aims primarily at cheap popularity and wide circulation of his writings, cannot be expected to produce anything of lasting value providing 'joy for ever'. Thus a sensational detective tale may prove profitable from a commercial point of view, but it cannot be a perennial fountain of joy and inspiration like a great drama of Shakespeare or a superb poetical composition of Rabindranath. A really artistic work of a painter or a delicate exposition of classical music by a genuine artiste wins appreciation of small groups of connoisseurs, while commonplace pictures that catch the eye or lilting cinema-hall music that pleases the crowd often prove much more profitable, though not durable performances. Art is noble, art is perennial. It is symbol of eternal passion and eternal pain, which sustains and inspires humanity. To commercialise it is to debase it.

A true poet or a true artist works with the aid of imagination and inspiration and appeals to emotion, while a commercial writer or a commercial artist is to produce writings or art matters according to the dictates of others. The productions in this atmosphere cannot be of any real intrinsic value. A work of art is a creation. Like a bud it blossoms in congenial atmosphere. Artists fail to find new joys and beauties in life when commerce settles on arts. In a sense, the art productions made to satisfy the commercial value cannot be called real arts. These are much inferior to real arts and are of transient value.

With the disappearance of the feudal lords and big landlords having interests in arts and literature artists and men of letters have been exposed to the fierce struggle for existence. Since literature and fine arts do not have the usual utilitarian value, artists have very little capital to trade in their wares. Hence, in the struggle for survival they are either using up their talents for commercial transactions or are getting lost and extinct. Thus although there is no denying that the commercialisation of art is wholly debasing the purport of art, men are now more attracted to this type of art works. (419 words)

170. The importance of trifles. (WBCS '64)

The poet has sung that "little drops of water and little grains of sand make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land". The proverb also tells the same thing in different words "Take care of the pence and pounds will take care of themselves." We are apt to be blinded by the glamour of big things and we get into the habit of overlooking things that are not big in themselves. But this is a very unfortunate habit of mind and it shows that we have not learnt the all-important lesson that out of the small and apparently insignificant come all the great and significant things of our life. One paisa is such a very small thing that it is almost ridiculous to suggest that one should be careful how one spends it. But a little thought will show at once how regard for such trifle can be the starting point of really big things. If one saves ten paise per day, one can collect a neat little sum at the end of five or ten years and with the money so obtained one can fulfil many a cherished ambition. Rags and torn ends of clothes do not seem to be of any importance. They are very often thrown away as useless. But if they are preserved, they can be exchanged for valuable or useful things that beautify the household or remove long-felt wants. There are people who make a living by collecting these rags and selling them to factories where they serve as raw materials for finished goods. This is a very humble instance of the way in which trifles can acquire importance in our daily life. It applies to more significant spheres of human life. It is the habit of most people to hang on men of influence from whom they expect to have favour and patronage. People who are socially unimportant are apt to be cold-shouldered by these worldly men. But there are many situations in life where these socially unimportant people can render service that cannot be obtained from the higher-ups. In the sphere of morals a comparatively minor infringement of moral law is apt to be overlooked as a thing of minor importance. Unable to resist the persuasion of his friends, a school boy permits himself to smoke just to oblige them. In his view and in the view of his friends this is an extremely trifling thing and cannot surely have much influence on character. But once he behaves in this complacent manner

he makes a loophole through which the evil may enter into and eventually undermine his character. Habits look trifling in themselves but they make up the sum total of a man's character and outlook. In combating diseases or in detecting crimes even the trifles play an important role. Some great discoveries were made from things appearing *prima facie* to be trifles. A small defect in a flying aeroplane or looseness of a small fish-plate in a railway track may bring out a big disaster. A little carelessness may attract thieves and swindlers to rob one's valuables. So the importance of trifling things cannot be over-stated.

(524 words)

171. On being modern-minded (WBCS '68, IAS '53)

Possibly the most appropriate symbol for modernity would be a big query mark after life itself. An English critic has aptly called Twentieth Century the age of interrogation. The spirit of quest dates back to the Renaissance which set aside outdated ideas and started the assessment of life all afresh. The basic approach of this new philosophy of life was doubt—doubt which was the beginning of the end of all dogmas and superstitions. The Gospel of doubt is undoubtedly the gift of science. It was Galileo who made the first bold attempt to break away from the chains of old and established ideas, and worn out conventions. He fearlessly adhered to his quest for truth and undertook a number of experiments which marked him as the father of modern time—the first full-fledged man of science.

Lure of modernism has brought about endless oddities and incongruities of human behaviour. Atrocious things are often done in the name of novelty or fashion in matters of dress, in art and in literature. The sense of values has changed and most things are discarded merely because they have existed long. One feature of modern life is the declining hold of religion and the reason is, undoubtedly, the triumph of human reasons as expressed in the rapid march of science. In the ultimate analysis religion is the offspring of fear and a feeling of helplessness. With the growing mastery over the forces of Nature, man is becoming increasingly sceptical about the necessity for religion.

The impact of science on human life has, beyond doubt, changed the very landscape of man's experience. A modern man not only looks askance at 'a priori' method but also feels the complexity that attends upon such a spirit of enquiry. Psychology or psychoanalysis is just the logical sequence of such an enquiry into the realm of our mind. In a sense peoples' minds today are more subtle than they were half a century back. And, the greater demand for complexity is also a part of the modern industrialized society. Since science has brought almost everything under the sun for analytical study and research, the modern mind is very much besieged by a sense of tension and anguish. In the field of science it has led to the experimentalist zeal, in the field of literature and philosophy to existentialism. It cannot be denied that this zeal for experiment and research has often led a modern man to a sense of loneliness and frustration, to a sense of moral and psychological impasse. The picture of the modern mind has been honestly portrayed by T. S. Eliot in his poems, where the loneliness of a modern man, his sense of incapacity to deal with the world which only overpowers him with endless complexity represent the anguish and the yearning of the modern mind for a lost world of simplicity and honesty. Even primitivism at times appears to be a solace or refuge from such a sense of insuperable difficulty. The problems of modernity seek to re-establish the importance of religious emotion that can do away with the restlessness and hollowness of life in our times. Thus we find that the most modern types of Beatles and Hippies of the civilized countries of England and America seek peace and happiness through Indian mode of transcendental meditation and Yogas.

(552 words)

172. "What is this life, if full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare !"

(WBCS '68, IAS '50)

Or, Enjoying one's leisure (IAS '69)

Life in a modern city is full of stress and strains. From dawn to dusk a city dweller constantly faces the challenge of everyday life. A thousand and one worries keep him busy and

restless throughout the day. Even the sweet charmer sleep sometimes eludes him. In the midst of this queer oddities, heedless haste, blind fury and jostling and elbowing in what is called struggle for existence in modern human society one may well cry out with the poet (W. H. Davies)—

"What is this life, if full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare !"

The right use of leisure is synonymous with holiness and manifests itself in abounding energy and goodwill. With the progress of civilization, the leisure diminishes. Unless the love of leisure is rooted deep into one's character one will never achieve it. Nobody can have a pleasurable thought and general feeling unless he has time to stand and stare. Leisure is the soil in which all happiness of life grows. One of the greatest art in life is that of finding leisure and making a right use of it.

In our dull and dreary existence a city dweller who is preoccupied with the cheerless job of wooing the mammon, finds no leisure, no respite to stretch his limbs under the cool shadow of a tree, to worship the beauty of Nature that lies all about. A casual look at the blue horizon or a passing glance at the playful squirrel gathering nuts under a tree can only divert our attention for a moment. But if one chooses to snatch away some hours of his life to watch and to admire the objects of nature, to forget all about his animal existence for a while, he is blessed with the joy of living.

Though work is in a way worship, it is work punctuated with leisure which makes it so. Though man has been ordained to work, to earn his bread with ceaseless toil, he has also been granted gainful rest to make up for his life of suffering. Indeed, life would cease to be worth-living without this leisure. The greatest drawback of our urban civilization is its lust for power and money, its indifference to the sense of beauty. Art and culture, poetry and music, whatever value we may attach to them in our time, are all the products of leisure—of the devoted worship of beauty in Nature. The ugliness and squalor that lie about us in our cities speak eloquently of the

importance of the sense of beauty in life. Even in the midst of work we must import the sense of enjoyment and beauty.

Of course, there are some people on earth to make a virtue of leisure and consider work utterly unnecessary. Like lotus-eaters they would like to while away their precious time in slothful ease and comfort. Hence their complain: 'Why should life all labour be?' But an unending stretch of leisure soon proves to be boring enough even for those who are its apostles. A life of ceaseless work, likewise, is a desert but with its oasis—some intervening periods of leisure and recreation. While the feverish zeal for work makes us fretful, but the leisurely enjoyment of beauty makes our life worthliving.

(545 words)

178.

Work and leisure

(WBCS '67)

It is unceasing work that keep going the wheels of modern civilization. So a life keyed to all work and no play is generally recommended. But the value of leisure in life should not be overlooked.

It is one of the paradoxes of modern civilization that in spite of the invention of various machines that are meant to relieve us of the drudgery of work, we have to do today more of dull work than we did ever before and we do not have as much leisure as our forefathers used to have. And because we live in a fast age we have forgotten to spend the little amount of leisure we get as it should be spent. Our moments of leisure are spent in hectic amusement that excites the nerves.

A life that is spent idly, that knows no excitement is a singularly dull life. The charm and the value of life consists in work. Whatever we achieve in life we achieve through sincere and honest work. Work indeed is the sign of life. If we study the lives of the great men we realize again and again that it is their work that has made them immortal. But another realization that we derive from our study of these lives is that work and leisure were well balanced in the lives of these great men.

The old proverb that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy still holds much truth in it. Constant work tells on

our nerves and our brain and body need some rest. If we do not give them the rest that they need, then gradually we lose our usual skill and competence and start making mistakes. Hence leisure is needed to keep ourselves consistently efficient. We should take rest to pull our distracted minds together and cultivate a little detachment.

But the conditions of modern mind are such that leisure is spent in excitement and does not bring any relaxation. Modern civilization has given us so many exciting amusements that we always look for stimulating activities. Modern men would rather spend their leisures in drinking and gambling and in other vulgar amusements than in quiet contemplation. The great works of art, philosophy and culture are products of deep contemplation which is only possible in the hours of leisure. The right use of leisure is synonymous with holiness and manifests itself in abounding energy and goodwill.

"What is this life, if full of care.

We have no time to stand and stare !"

With the progress of civilization, the leisure diminishes. Unless the love of leisure is rooted deep into one's character, one will never achieve it. Nobody can have a "pleasurable thought and genial feeling" unless he has time to "stand and stare." Leisure is the soil in which all happiness of life grows. Nobody can look within and dig deep into himself unless he has leisure. One of the greatest art in life is that of finding leisure and making a right use of it. And Russell opines, "To be able to fill leisure intelligently is the last product of civilization." (520 words)

174. The improvements in facilities for travel have not been an unmixed blessing (WBCS '64)

A distinctive feature of modern times is phenomenal improvement in methods of travelling. The discovery of Railways, Steamships, aeroplanes, jet-planes has brought about revolutionary changes in this sphere. It is now a far cry from primitive modes of transport when it took months and years to cover a distance which can now be spanned in course of a few

hours. It is needless to say that this improvement has conferred untold benefits on the human race. It has brought widely separated areas into closer contact and by doing so helped to remove superstitions and false ideas about each other, that used to be entertained by people in old times. Other benefits are too obvious to need enumeration. But these need not blind us to the fact that even this miraculous progress in travelling has a darker side. The chance of accident, to begin with, has increased a thousand-fold. In former times, travelling to long distances was attended with risks. Travellers always risked the chances of being set upon, robbed and even killed by marauders and highwaymen. But this is nothing to what is happening now-a-days. Not a day passes but we hear of accidents either in the air or on the railway. Things have come to such a pass recently that when we have to see off a relative who is travelling to a distant place by air, we cannot do it without dark forebodings. Apart from this increase in the chance of accidents, travelling in these days is hardly as educative as it used to be in the past. Men now travel being packed like sardines from one place to another. Formerly a man travelling on foot could take his time and travel leisurely, getting into intimate touch with the various people and localities through which he passed. It gave him a vivid idea of the geography of his country and of the numerous groups of people inhabiting it. It was a fitting supplement to his formal education. But now-a-days one does not learn anything in the course of travelling. One is simply conveyed by a fast moving vehicle from one place to another, the eyes and ears closed to all impressions from the outside world. It follows, therefore, that the educational value of travelling is much less today than what it used to be in the past. Again the improved means of transport has opened a paradise to smugglers. Smuggling aided by modern technique is much easier by a fast-moving plane than it used to be by slow-moving carts which invited inspection at every stage of the journey. We read in newspapers reports of smugglers being brought to book but this is only the outer fringe of the problem that has assumed alarming proportion with modern development in the art of travelling. (464 words)

175, Different kinds of transport (WBCS '65, '74)

We now live in an age of science. Science has greatly improved our transport system. Gone are the days when men had to walk on foot in order to travel from one place to another. Bi-cycles, motor-cycles, buses, trams, trains, ships and aeroplanes are all gifts of science. These gifts of science have conquered distances between different countries, and the vastness of the world has now been brought within limits.

There are mainly three kinds of transport—road transport, water transport and air transport. Road transport is the most popular form of transport. Cars, buses, lorries, motor-cycles, trams and trains ply on roads. However trams and trains can run only on their fixed tracks. Thousands of people travel by these vehicles on roads every day. In villages people travel by bullock-carts and bi-cycles. In towns and cities rich people travel in their cars, and the middle class people use trams and buses. In big cities like Calcutta so many vehicles ply on roads that there is frequent traffic congestion. People travel by trams and buses when they move from one part of a city to another. But they travel by trains when they go to distant places. Water transport is not as popular as road transport is. Primitive men used boats for travelling and carrying goods from one place to another. In the present age we travel by ships. Ships carry us and our goods from one continent to another. Inland waterways play an important role in transport of countries like Bangladesh. Air transport is the most modern form of transport. It is very popular in advanced countries. But in under-developed countries air transport is not at all popular because it is expensive. In India, for example, only the rich people enjoy the facilities of air transport.

Economic development of a country depends to some extent on the facilities of different kinds of transport. Quick and safe transport of goods is essential to a developing economy. Different kinds of transport are helpful to smooth administration of a country. When a river overflows its banks the government quickly sends soldiers to rescue helpless men and women. Sometimes it becomes necessary to carry food

by helicopters to people in flood-affected areas. The military strength of a country and its power to defend its territory depend largely on the facilities of different kinds of transport. During the Chinese aggression in 1962 the Indian soldiers could not put up any resistance worth the name because, among other things, there were no roads in the Himalayan regions. Every progressive State pays special attention to transport and communication in order to meet the growing demands of development and defence.

At present scientists are busy in devising new types of transport. Men of today are always busy. They stand badly in need of fast-moving trains and aeroplanes. So steam engines are now things of the past. Electric engines of trains are perfectly in keeping with the spirit of the times. Jets now carry us faster through air. There are other types of transport, viz. Tube Railway and Circular Railway, which also carry thousands of commuters. But we are no longer satisfied with our living conditions on earth. We are now thinking of going to other planets. Powerful rockets have been invented, and some American and Russian explorers have already visited the Space and some even landed on the moon. Let us hope that the day is not far off when the people on earth will enjoy regular trips in space-rockets. (582 words)

176. Travel as a part of Education (CL '53)

The educational value of travel can hardly be over-estimated. Reading of books gives only a theoretical knowledge, which requires to be supplemented by direct observation of men and things and thus travel plays an important role in the sphere of education. Travel is interesting and instructive and makes education pleasurable. Travel is considered essential for thorough and quick grasp of some of the subjects like History, Geography, Economics, Sociology, Anthropology etc. A visit to the historical places like Haldighat, Panipat, Plassey, Delhi, Agra, Jerusalem, Thermopylae and others will illumine the dark chapters of history and give definite ideas about what has been written in so many books. The knowledge of Art and

Sculpture will remain incomplete without visit to Ajanta, Ellora and the Louvre. The engineering and scientific education also requires visit to great undertakings and factories and workshops for practical knowledge. Travel adds to the store of our knowledge and thus leads to perfection of our education. Poets and writers get immense materials from the sights and scenes, culture and tradition of different places for gainful utilisation in their writings. Byron, Wordsworth and Goldsmith as also our Rabindranath made extensive tours. Statesmen, diplomats and businessmen also require extensive travel for achieving success in their own spheres. Travel removes irrational prejudices and narrowness of our minds.

The crave for travelling to far and near lands was found even in the past when journey was very difficult for want of regular communications. The travel records of Megasthenes, Fa-hien, Hientsang, Marco Polo, Bernier and others have become important sources of history of their times. The adventurous spirit of travel helped the discoveries of new lands, the explorations of the Arctic and the Antarctic regions as also the expeditions to the highest mountains. The scientific inventions of modern times—railways, steamships, motor cars and aeroplanes, have made the travel very easy and quick and free from any fatigue or trouble. Travel can be made by land, sea and air. The facilities for travel have bound the different peoples close together.

In foreign countries, there is a system of educational tour either during the vacation or after the completion of the course. It is unfortunate that Indian students have very little opportunities for such travel. The universities and educational institutions have also no special arrangement for such study tours. Travel is a part of education only when it is made with eyes open in a planned and methodical way. A flying visit to a number of places with thoughtless haste may add to one's vanity but is of little educative value. Through travel, one must know the people and their living, their manners and customs, laws and dialects, social affairs and artistic tastes as also the resources and other special features of the country.

Travel has a better effect than the Audio-Visual Aids of

Cinema, Radio and Television to supplement our education. Governments of our country should, in collaboration with the Railways and the educational institutions, take active steps for study tours of our boys to different sites of historical and industrial interests and development projects. Students of Free India should have a first-hand knowledge of the development projects and the community development projects undertaken in our country under the Five-Year Plans and should therefore visit the important sites of the Mayurakshi and the Damodar Valley Projects as also the Locomotive Factory at Chittaranjan and the Fertiliser Factory at Sindri. Recently some private organisations like Children's Fresh Air Excursion Society and the Youth Hostel Association, have been set up for conducting disciplined excursions of students. Our country needs more attention to travel from both State and private sectors for all round improvement of our education. 612 words,

177.

Tourism

, Misc '72)

Tourism is a much used word meaning "organized touring". The main purpose of such touring is more educational than recreative. Tourism is one of the distinguishing features of modern life. In ancient times tourism was not very popular because of the hazards of travelling. The passion for tourism has been greatly heightened now due mainly to the invention of electric trains, motor cars, ships and above all aeroplanes.

Tours in one's own country or in foreign countries are pleasing in many ways. There is no joy on earth that is purer than that of a tourist who stands on the snowy heights of a mountain or on the shore of a majestic sea or before the unrivalled Tajmahal. Tours make man adventurous and resourceful. It is the love of tours that has inspired men to scale the heights of the Alps and the Himalayas.

Tours have great educative value. Tours are sources of inspiration to the historians, the scientists, and the philosophers. Tours broaden a man's outlook on life and improve the quality of his education. In Western countries the students who pass out of schools and colleges go out for tours on the continent to enrich their store of knowledge.

In India tours are now very popular. Here many people go to the holy places every year. Many Indian students of science and technology are sent to foreign countries by the Central Government and the mercantile firms for practical training in the subjects in which they have specialized. India attracts many foreign tourists every year. Foreigners visit India because it has many beautiful sights of Nature and places of historical interest.

Genuine tourists are world citizens ; they bring nations of the world closer to one another. Tourism will be of great importance in the future because it promotes international understanding and helps the resources of a country by earning foreign exchanges. (312 words)

**178. Your experience of unpleasant incidents in
over-crowded trams and buses (Misc. '68)**

A close look at trams and buses during the office hours will convince you of the fact that Bengalees have a great power of endurance. Almost sardine-packed these buses ply through the crowded Calcutta streets at the great risk of overturning any moment or even sandwiching a number of people in the course of overtaking others. If you are quite new to the city, you may have some wild conjectures about the probable causes of over-crowding. You will have to leave a number of buses or trams before you may get in a crowded tram or bus, helplessly clutching at the iron rods projected from the ceiling of these vehicles.

Once, patiently straining my muscles, I was insecurely hanging about the entrance of a bus which was speeding through the Central Avenue. All of a sudden, there was a heavy jolt, and the bus came to a halt almost instantaneously. Unable to withstand the shock, some of the passengers fell upon one another and caused a great deal of confusion. In the jostle that followed, a pick-pocket relieved a passenger of his purse. The victim realized it when the bus was again on the move. He raised hue and cry only to create a greater confusion. Everyone was almost suspecting everybody for a time. I felt almost a sense of suffocation. When the bus arrived at Esplanade,

I got down to breathe for a space. On another occasion, an old man admonished a youngman for having trampled on his feet in a crowded tram. It almost led to a scuffle among the passengers when the youth called him names. The young man sarcastically remarked that if he was so much sensitive he should better own a car or travel in a taxi. The old man kept silent all the while and got down at the next stop. I returned home confused and uneasy. (309 words)

179. A rainy day at home (WBCS '64)

A rainy day, at all seasons of the year, has a peculiar fascination for me. The charm increases a hundred-fold in summer when the parched earth cries for rain and the human body exhausted by the mounting heat pines for a day of rest. Yesterday, after a long spell of drought, my heart's desire was fulfilled. In the morning as I woke up after a night spent in restless tossing on the bed my eyes were soothed by a sky overcast with inky masses of rain-bearing clouds. On other days it was a torture to look at the blazing hot day outside, but yesterday I kept the shutters open as I had my fill of the velvety darkness in the sky above and the earth below. I realised, as I had never done before, why the rainy season through the ages has been such a prolific source of poetry and song. From the days of Kalidas to our own day, generations of poets have been moved to poetic utterance at sight of a cloud-bedecked sky. Even men who like myself have not even a whiff of poetry in them, are strangely and deeply affected at such a sight. A rainy day in summer is very much like an oasis in the midst of desert sands. It has a distinct personality of its own, isolating it from the dry uniformity of burning summer days. One likes to pass the hours in home looking at the dripping sky and giving oneself up to thoughts and fancies that are so very unlike those of an ordinary summer day. The rainy day fascinates one to suspend all normal work for the day and allow oneself to be borne on the wings of fancy, to the tune of the steady patter of rains outside, into the misty dreamland of Romance.

This is what I tried to do yesterday. As the minutes lengthened into hours there was a change in the face of Nature.

public and private property. Mobile Ticket Checking staff should be more alert to stop ticket-less travelling. Costs of journey from one place to another have shot up by leaps and bounds and the bonafide passengers may expect some more comforts during their railway travel.

To avoid accidents, which are not few and far between, signal system must be improved and the drivers must be more watchful and trained. If these defects are removed, the Railway travel will again be a thing of pleasure instead of being fraught with dangers and discomforts. (321 words)

181

A ride in a bus in Calcutta

(WBCS '64)

It is one of my pastimes to take a long bus-ride on the afternoon of a sunny day. It helps to remove the fatigue caused by long hours of work in an enclosed space and clears the brain. Yesterday, I had a ride of this kind. I picked up a double-decker at Shyambazar terminus and my idea was to enjoy a ride on its upper deck to the southern end of the town. Accordingly I made my way to the upper storey and took my perch in a comfortable corner from which I could command a view of the front and the sides. It was not long before every unit of available space in the upper deck was filled by a surging crowd of men and women. Presently the bus started. The pavements on both sides of the road along which it travelled were filled by persons of all ages and conditions. The day had been a sultry one and all these people had evidently come out of their confines to enjoy the pleasant coolness of a summer evening in Calcutta. As the bus passed the cinema houses on this side of Calcutta I found people gaily dressed standing in long queues before the booking offices with eager expectancy. In view of my retrospective habit of mind, I travelled back to the early days of Calcutta when this part of the city was very much backward and bereft of most of modern amenities, but the people had not so much worries and problems as in the present days. With an effort I tore myself away from that scene of a long past day and found that the bus was travelling across the junction of Vivekananda Road and Bidhan Sarani. In a well-known hostel near about this place some years of my

student life in Calcutta were spent. My mind again had a dip into the past, this time into the hopes and aspirations of my vanished youth. Almost all the hopes that I used to cherish in those early days have been wrecked in the progress through life and yet a recollection of them brings an air of freshness into my jaded life like the faint perfume from a long-crushed flower. Before I finished recollection of the old days of my student life in Calcutta, the bus was travelling through the College Street before a facade of imposing buildings housing the Presidency College, the University and the Medical College. The multi-storeyed University Building has been rebuilt with a new design in place of the old Senate House. The change, perhaps, has been necessary on account of the passage of time. Still my mind could not but feel a deep sadness at the disappearance of the grandeur of the University Senate Hall in the past. The old landmarks were steadily disappearing and twenty years from now it will be an altogether different Calcutta from what it had been in my youth. (490 words)

182. The Common Man's lot in Calcutta today

(WBCS '68)

Back from a preview of Satyajit Ray's 'Mahangar', a film critic quipped, "It was all about the common man's lot in Calcutta. Really, it was the most representative picture of the city life in Calcutta. With all its sky-scrapers and massive structures the city of Calcutta has still a plebeian look. Indeed, the story of this great city has a great deal to do with the common man's ceaseless struggle for existence and survival.

While rushing for buses and trams after a hurried meal in the morning, or desperately struggling to secure a foothold on them even at the risk of losing one's purse or worse still, losing one's limbs, the common man in Calcutta never loses his zest for life. Often in an overcrowded bus bound for the Binoy-Badal-Dinesh Bagh (Dalhousie Sq.) area one comes across some witty remarks and innocent jokes, good-humouredly shared by one's fellow passengers.

The common man in Calcutta has, however, time to appreciate the window-dressing at big shops, the angry posters of

militant parties on the wayside, or the grimaces of the pavement dwellers and hawkers all about. Some interesting things or sights appearing as diversion from the mundane day-to-day life of Calcutta are not also uncommon. On rainy days, the common man in Calcutta must thank his lucky stars if he can safely reach home after the grim experience of being late in the office and all wet to the skin. One can hardly distinguish the water-logged streets of Calcutta from those of Venice on such occasion, save for the unwieldy double-deckers and daring taxicabs which ply through knee-deep water. Umbrellas are of little help when one has to board a bus, and the waterproofs are too often a scare to those who want to salvage their rain-soaked clothes at any cost. When the city dweller at last sneaks into his shadowy apartment elbowing his way through a stream of people he is just the monarch of it all. Whatever irritation awaits him at home, whatever food he shares with the inmates of the house he is just a different being now—his homely self.

The common man in Calcutta is, nevertheless, fortunate enough to have some merry time at the weekend witnessing football or cricket matches at the Maidan or visiting a Cinema show. Although cars of various looks and sizes ignore his humble presence on the pavement as they fleet past, he flatters himself with the idea that he is after all a silent witness to this grand procession. Of course, he knows that in this city of processions he may one day be pushed into a procession by some freak of fortune and then he might have his revenge upon those car owners who ignored him. But he also understands that with all the slogan-shouting and impressive marches his fellow citizens have hardly reached anywhere. His final feeling is not one of despair but of resignation—resignation to his own lot. Yet, in hours of silent reflection he feels proud of the very fact that with all his hardships he belongs to Calcutta—the big, and the amorphous crowd of people that makes the city, its tradition and history, (528 words)

188. Titles—blessing or curse ? (WBCS '67)

With civilized life we invariably associate cities. Village

represents backwardness. In cities we expect to have comfort, cleanliness, luxury ; in villages we expect dirt and poverty, ignorance and lack of culture. In other words, city-life is a blessing to us, village-life a curse

A close analysis of life in city, however, shows that it is both a blessing and a curse, that it has its advantages as well as disadvantages. The disadvantages that man faced in the villages led him to build cities where he came to have more facilities and comfort. With the advances made in science and technology the cities were improved and most of the problems that we associate with rural life were completely done away with. In the modern cities we get almost everything that we may want by mere asking. The modern cities today, as a matter of fact, represent the highest point that man has been able to scale so far in his march forward.

It is the desire for more and more material comfort that led man to build cities. Better houses, better roads, better shops, better hotels, better food and better health and more happiness—these were aimed at in cities and the aims have been to a great extent realized. Really, in cities we find such houses that are in all respects ideal. They exhibit highest technical skill. They are furnished with all the latest appliances that ensure comfort and security. Radios, telephones, televisions and gramophones make life in a city much interesting and these are such essential part of city-life that one cannot do without them.

Going out in a city is much easier and more comfortable than it is in a village due to improved transport system and better roads. Long-distance travel is not a problem in a city due to the availability of trams, buses and taxis there in any number. The two most important advantages of city-life that make it seem an unmixed blessing are that of better medical treatment and better education. In a city there are good hospitals and doctors and medicines are available there more readily and in greater number. Good schools and colleges are mostly in cities. The result is that good education is only possible in cities. Books are readily available there and the atmosphere is more congenial to the students.

However, the cities are not unmixed blessing. They have their drawbacks. In spite of the material comforts provided in a city there is not much happiness there. Life has become there a little too much artificial, sophisticated and complicated. Man has become selfish : none has any time to spare for others and money and status have become the only standards of a man's recognition in a city. There is no free air and the people are fed up with the smoke and noise of the industries located near-by. Most cities are so over-crowded that getting a shelter there is a great problem. Lots of people are often squeezed into a small house that does not see the sun. Living is quite expensive in cities. Naturally there is a gradual fall in the standard of living and this leads to dirt and unhygienic conditions, which the abundance of cars and lights and gaudy dresses and cultural functions cannot obviously hide.

(550 words)

184. Life in the twenty-first century

(Misc '68, WBCS '76)

How sweet it is to dream of a life lived in this country in the twenty-first century, which commences after expiry of barely twenty-three years from now. How sweet it is to imagine that a new era will come into being laden with hopes and promises for the suffering humanity, a world where peace and happiness, love and beauty will reign for ever.

In this fascinating intellectual exercises, we must search for a solid basis of reason from the available facts whether our dreams are justified. With all the Plans and Projects fully maturing, including those for self-sufficiency in foodgrains, consumer goods and oil, there would be plenty for everyone to eat. Of course, food-substitutes are likely to be discovered to solve the food problem of the growing population. The wonders of science will carry us off to distant planets and will relay pictures of earth-peoples' new settlement on the Moon on the screens of our T. V. sets. Space shuttles will be in operation. It would be much cheaper than the commercial aircraft and would shorten the travelling time considerably. Sea-bed will be explored for minerals, food-wealth and oil and

finally for habitation. Television by satellite might well revolutionize current ideas on education and communications. Moving escalator-style pavements will be used in cities for pedestrian transport. Better weather forecasting through meteorological satellites will save the farmer crores of rupees now lost through floods, frost and cyclones. Power generation from the Nuclear Plants will lit up the whole country even to the remotest corner and would revolutionize both agriculture and industry. India in the twenty-first century would be happier, socially, economically and politically. Essential goods would be available in plenty. There would be fairly goods house for everyone to live in, properly furnished and equipped with all sophisticated gadgets to make life comfortable. Literacy would be universal and a better sense of citizenship and of a sense of duty and responsibility towards the country would be seen. Nearly everything would be done by machines and computers and electronic brains and the citizen's jobs would be reduced to that of supervision duty.

A new set of values will, however, replace the old ideas of morality and sex. Marriage ties will be rather loose. Dress will be revolutionized and plastic, polyester and other synthetic materials will replace cotton and silk. Population of the world will reach an alarming size though control over the growth of population will achieve a tangible success. Nuclear stock-piling by all the big countries will reduce possibilities of a world war, though local skirmishes may continue as at present. In education-front, technology may be adopted in a vast scale in schools, colleges and universities. Process of communication may also be revolutionized. Telephone fitted with televisions may make hearing and seeing possible at the same time. Already supersonic aircrafts cover a long distance in an incredibly short time ; the day may not be far-off when atomic-powered aircrafts will rival the speed of light.

All these are quite fine and wistful. But when we turn our eyes a little down to this solid earth of ours, when we remember the maddened race of arms in the rival camps of Big Powers, we feel we have got good reasons to be alarmed about the next world war—a Nuclear war—which may cause a complete

annihilation of the human race. Let us hope that we would not face any such calamity but would find a better and a happier life in the coming century. (580 words)

185. The misfortunes of an unusually tall man

(WBCS '60)

A tallish person having a good physique looks manlier than one who is dwarfish. But all abnormalities are odd, so an abnormally tall man appears odd too. Everywhere he is an object of embarrassing gaze of others. An unusually tall man towers higher than all others in a crowd and is thus the observed of all observers. Not only does he feel queer in being an object of curiosity, but he has also many misfortunes to encounter in his daily life. If he is not cautious while entering a room and does not bend sufficiently low, he is apt to collide his head with the upper door-frame and get grievously hurt. His cot in his room must be much bigger than ordinary cots. If he happens to enter a hospital, the hospital authorities have to improvise a special bed for him.

In a public meeting or a cultural function an unusually tall man obstructs the view of others present and direct or indirect comments are hurled at him. He must stoop low to avoid inconvenience to others. In a cinema or theatre-hall he prefers to choose a seat as far back as possible, so that he may not come in the way of others. When an unusually tall man wants to hug or kiss a child, he has to kneel or bend very low, or lift the child to his arms. A similar situation is created when he has to be garlanded at a reception or has to be offered a handshake. It is as difficult for him to board a bus as to pick up anything from the floor. Street urchins sometimes jeer at an abnormally tall man and street curs bark in fright. He always feels uneasy, for he knows that his abnormality evokes amusement and curious interest of people. His social life becomes stunted in this way.

A man who is unusually tall must necessarily spend a lot on his dresses. This proves a great handicap if he happens to be a man of small means. The tailor faces a problem in taking measurement for a new dress for him. It is an amusing sight

when tailor stands on a stool with his tape and tall man co-operates by bending and kneeling.

Recently, reports appeared in the papers about a man who is regarded as the tallest man in the world. He is said to be getting taller even after attaining a record height. Doctors are of the view that unusual tallness is caused by certain defects in some glands of the body and attempts are said to have been made to arrest abnormal growth by means of operation.

It is a misfortune to have any abnormality, either physical or mental. Both are embarrassing and need remedy. The misfortunes of an unusually tall man are many, which are well-nigh distressing not only to him, but also to those who associate with him in private or public life. (490 words)

186. Advantages and disadvantages of being young

(WBCS '75)

Or. Today's rebellious youth

(IAS '73)

We often recollect our past old days and think we had a good time when we were young. We often wish we could be young again so that there would be no business, no responsibilities and no knowledge of this wicked world.

The advantages of being young are too many. It is a life full of hopes and possibilities and full of splendid dreams of what he will do and be in his life before the end of his youthful vigour and enthusiasm. The young people are emotional and progressive in mental outlook. It is a time of romance, when all the world is beautiful and new and full of surprise. It is an age of leadership, be that in school or college committees, in local committees or in political fields. It is the time for acquiring the highest academic and other qualifications and for rendering sincere and hard labour to build up one's career and bright days in future. They are also idealists and are, by and large, free from vices and corruptions.

The days of our youth are the days of glory. It is at this time that we are bubbling with energy, both physical and intellectual. This energy finds an outlet in adventures and thus all adventurous deeds are achieved in these days of youth. To them Everest cannot be too high nor the South Pole too

remote. They are apt to dash forward to unexplored parts of the high seas and the mysterious lands. Youth is the season of hope, enterprise and energy, to a nation as well as an individual. The youths of a country are its backbone. On them will soon devolve the charge of seeing to the welfare of all the dear institutions and the sacred traditions of the land and solving the intricate social and political problems of their country. The young men are the links between the past and the coming generation and ought to maintain the heritage and the tradition. On them rests the charge of maintaining their national glory, happiness and prosperity. The whole future lies before them and it is their duty to turn it to the best use for the sake of both their own interest and that of their nation.

Amongst the disadvantages of being young, the youth are by nature inexperienced and excitable. They are emotional and short-tempered and often get irritated on a trivial matter and pick up quarrel with others for nothing. They suffer from a spirit of irreverence and disobedience and often show disrespect and discourtesy to elders and seniors. In some professions like legal, medical and consultants, the young age is a draw-back as the people seek advice from grey hairs. In the case of promotion to higher posts of responsibilities the aged are preferred to the young. The duties and responsibilities which the young man owes to his ownself, to his parents and elders, to the society in which he lives, to his country and to the wide world are some of the liabilities assigned to the youths. As they are inexperienced, they are susceptible to being cheated. As they have no tolerance to other's views and statements, their participation in different committees and organisations often end in chaos (340 words)

**187. The advantages and disadvantages of
being born rich (WBCS '64)**

Rabindranath was born in a rich family. It is sometimes said that literary fame came easy to him because he was able to devote the whole of his time and attention to literature and no part of it had to be diverted to the need for earning a living.

Those who say this are sometimes prompted by jealousy to belittle his achievement. Even if Rabindranath had to contend with adverse forces the effluence of his genius would have left his impress upon the age. But there is some truth in the statement that his genius was assisted by the circumstances of his birth. This is obviously one of the advantages of being born rich. The field is prepared and all that one has to do is to direct one's innate powers along the right channel. Society is prepared to condone the occasional lapses of a man of genius who is born rich ; nay, everybody is prepared to lend him a helping hand to get out of the rut. High connexions, obliging friends and a host of hangers-on are at beck and call of a rich person. Political success is rated very highly in the modern world. But it is very difficult for a poor man to achieve any measure of success in this field. He may be a sincere and selfless worker but if he lacks the sinews of war his success is very dubious in a political campaign. On the other hand the way to political eminence is made smooth for a rich man by the resources at his command. He can win friends and supporters by distribution of his patronage.

But this is not to say that there is no disadvantage in being born rich. Rabindranath himself complained in his later years that he had been prevented from coming to closer grips with life by the circumstances of his birth. His family position and social prestige had come in the way of his wider familiarity with the lower strata of human life. The thing that really counts is not riches or social position but the richness of experience. And this can be acquired only by coming into contact with different facets of life, high and low, the noble and the ignoble. A man born in a rich family has his life cut out for him and he is seldom allowed to stray beyond familiar grooves. But a man who has to make a living by his own efforts is sometimes driven into strange situations which undoubtedly enrich and broaden his outlook. It is an old saying that a struggling life strengthens the fibres and lays down the basis for future greatness. Examples of persons who were born poor but reached sublime heights through a patient and unceasing struggle against adverse forces are, by no means, rare. The cases of Iswarchandra in our

country or of Abraham Lincoln in America readily occur to the mind. Such people are distinguished by a rock-like tenacity of purpose which refuses to be browbeaten by the forces arrayed against it. This trait of mind is seldom seen among people who are favoured by fortune in their birth.

(424 words)

188. "Glory is like a circle in the water" (WBCS '65)

A circle drawn in water has no substance at all. It fades away no sooner than it is drawn. There are moments of depression and gloom in the life of every person when it is natural for people to think that all human achievements are doomed to decay and therefore they are not of any importance in life. Time in its inexorable march from age to age brings everything down to the dust and nothing remains what it once had been. If one thinks of the splendours of the past and of the historical figures that strode across the stage of the earth and then contemplate the nothingness to which they all have been reduced, one is filled with a sense of futility of all human things. What has become of the Great Roman Empire that had once flung its shadow over half the world ? What had become of the glory attained by Greece at one time ? Monuments in stone that had been erected in the distant past in the fond hope that they would survive the onslaught of time and proclaim the glory of their architects for all time to come has either crumbled into dust or survived in shattered fragments. As one thinks of the great conquerors of the earth who once overpowered the world and then of the fate that has overtaken them in the irresistible march of time, one cannot help thinking that glory is indeed a circle drawn in water.

But this is only the cynic's way of looking at the panorama of human life. If everyone thinks only of the inevitable decay of the glory for all human endeavour, then all the spirit of work will go and the whole world will be reduced to a scene of sloth and indolence. The correct attitude is to think of oneself as a tiny and infinitesimal link in a grand design of society and civilization. Since the dawn of history man has been marching forward and the role of an individual man or even of an age is to

help forward this march to the best of his or its ability. It is inevitable that the achievements of the individual or of the age will be wiped away in time, but that is a necessity as otherwise they would come in the way of man's progress and prove as so much dead weight clogging the march of the human race towards a bright future. The individual should try to do his best for the race so that future generations may keep alive his image. Whether such glory lingers for some time or not, it should be a satisfaction for a man that he has been able to do his best and he has employed whatever little strength had been given him to the task of ameliorating human condition and leaving the world a better place than he found it. It is wise not to lay much emphasis on glory itself as it is transient like anything.

'500 words

**189. Every great movement comes to an end with
the birth of its founder (WBCS '69)**

However paradoxical it might appear, it is true that with the very birth of the founder any great movement comes to have its death warrant. Since no movement starts all of a sudden and it requires some ground-work before it can take shape, the founder of the movement only gives it the official baptism by providing its own charter. Now, the rigid discipline the declared objectives of a movement set down by the great leader delimits the process of its growth, and the decay starts and the end is foreseen.

The story of all political and social movements shows how the founders of different movements come to be instrumental in making the movements very much conditioned by their activities. In the absence of the illustrious leader the movement seems to stagnate or deviate from its proper path. But before the birth of the great leader everything on the lines of the movement has gone on well without being caught by any label. Take for instance the great socialist movement. All over the world socialist activities had continued from the very dawn of civilization. The primitive tribal societies were examples of socialist activities. But it was *Karl Marx* who gave the proper lead and the socialist movement spread all over the world. Who

can deny that Marx's enunciation of socialist ideas has opened up new avenues of thinking and living and yet at the same time has sown the very seeds of its disruption? Though socialism is spreading far and wide all over the world the primary objectives of socialism have come to be modified and have been subjected to new and newer interpretations. In the field of literature and arts various movements have been initiated by some great people. But along with their disappearance from the field of activity or his emergence as the founder of the movement by way of the Personality Cult, the movement itself has been on the wane. What is significant about such movements is the individual guidance provided by the founders. For a spontaneous growth and development of a movement natural circumstances should have a significant role to play. It is not the individual interpretation but the accumulated ideas of peoples which should go to contribute to the development of a movement or agitation.

The birth of the leader of any movement marks the Personality Cult and this leads to disruption and faction among its followers and co-workers. In fact such occasions should be considered as vital to the needs of people and not to any movement. As soon as a leader takes the role of a founder of some new ideals, a separate sect or group is formed by defection from the original one and the rival groups fight among themselves thus weakening the main movement. In art and literature, cubism, aestheticism, the symbolist as well the imagist movements have invariably lost their moorings with the appearance of the initiators of the movements. They gave the lead, yet at the same time, they proved to be the source of their future extinction. So, the birth of the founder of any movement can never be the starting point of any agitation or movement, but the very source of a process of decay. In fact, in the very birth of great founder of a movement the seeds of death lie reclined, and in fact, the movement comes to an end. (564 words)

190. Colours and sounds in Nature (WBCS '74)

Nature is rich in colours and sounds. The colours of Nature are mainly the hues of flowers and fruits which grow in diffe-

rent seasons. The sounds of Nature are produced by her forces like storm and earthquake. Birds and animals, the dumb creatures of Nature, produce different types of sounds.

Colours and sounds of Nature are permanent ; they do not change with the lapse of years. Man may come and man may go, but the sea and the sky remain unchanged in their colours. Sounds of Nature are not liable to change. Keats, for example, finds something permanent in the voice of the Nightingale :

The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown ;
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn.

Colours and sounds in Nature have variety. Colours of Nature change in different seasons of the year. In autumn and spring we notice a riot of colour in Nature. Thus a visitor to Darjeeling in autumn may feast his eyes on all the colours of the rainbow displayed by Nature. Sometimes various colours of Nature produce a unity of impression. Sounds of Nature are also of various types. Winds and raindrops produce different sounds in autumn and summer. Hardy has given a beautiful picture of various sounds of Nature at dawn in his pastoral novel "Far From the Madding Crowd" where Bathsheba felt that some interesting proceedings had been going on in the trees above head and around—

A coarse throated chatter was the first sound.
It was a sparrow just waking.
Next : "Chee-weeze-weeze !" from another retreat.
It was a finch.
Third : "Tink-tink-tink-tink-a-chink !" from the hedge.
It was a robin.
"Chuck-chuck-chuck !" overhead.
A squirrel.

It is true that the real beauty of colours and the sweetness of melodious sounds of Nature can be enjoyed only if we visit the riverside or the village outskirts or the hillside in the

evening or in the morning where Nature's boundless bounty amid a serene atmosphere fill the hearts with joy. Colour and sounds in Nature finely depict human moods. The red rose and mild sounds of vernal showers faithfully depict a lover's mood. The white lily symbolises the purity of a virgin. Tennyson in a poem depicts how sounds in Nature enliven at night :

"All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon ;
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd
To the dancers dancing in tune ;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon."

Colours and sounds in Nature are perennial sources of pleasures. They feed our emotions and give us poetic inspirations. The English romantic poets derived their inspiration from colours and sounds in Nature. Thus Shelley appeals to a Skylark to give him poetic inspiration :

"Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow."

Wordsworth, the greatest Nature poet of England, revealed in many of his poems the teachings and delightful feelings conveyed by Nature through her colours and sounds to human minds.

We live in an age of machine. Our way of life has become mechanical. In highly advanced countries men are becoming dehumanized. Many evils of material civilization have raised their ugly heads and are threatening to destroy all that is valuable in human life. We can combat them if we keep ourselves mentally healthy by enjoying the richness and infinite variety of colours and sounds in Nature. (592 words)

191. Climate and National character (WBCS '74)

The climate of a country is an important factor in the formation of national character. The history of individuals as

much as that of nations is decidedly influenced by the climatic conditions obtaining there. Change of climate means a change of the attitudes of the people. We know full well how the different seasons change our moods. In summer we cannot work hard, we spend most of our time in a lazy mood. But winter makes us vigorous. There is no denying that a cold climate makes a nation active and vigorous. Much of our physical incapacity is attributed to the enervating climate of West Bengal. In the case of England where cold is vehement but not deadening, the climate keeps the people on the move and drives them to labour all life long and keep them fit and healthy. In India we meet with great variations of climate as we move from one zone to the other. The extremes of heat and cold which alternate in the tropics make the people devitalised. Though we as a nation have made the greatest contribution to the culture and thought of the world, yet we have been always the victims of alien domination, especially by those races that hailed from temperate climates. It is the effect of this climate that made some people sturdy and well suited for the hard life of a warrior while made others suitable for brain-work and precision jobs.

Our conditions of living depend mainly on climate. If the climate be favourable for production of food, we shall get enough time for cultivating noble qualities of our character. If the climate makes it difficult for us to produce food, we shall have to devote most of our time and energies to production of food and we shall be deprived of leisure without which cultural activities cannot be carried on. Men who live in a hilly region, face many difficulties in earning their means of livelihood. Such men become hardy and industrious from their boyhood days. They develop a healthy attitude towards life and display manly attributes. Again those who live in a fertile valley do not face hardships, and consequently they become ease-loving. They get plenty of leisure time for cultivating the fine arts. So we may say that our conditions of living depend largely on the climate of the place we live in, and our characters are greatly influenced by our conditions of living.

The climate of a country influences the food habits of its

people.' Thus people who live in hot countries enjoy soft drinks, but inhabitants of cold countries drink wine. Fruit juice and wine have different effects on the characters of men. Again, men of cold countries, who take huge quantities of meat and wine, are likely to become different from people of hot countries who live on rice and vegetables. Thus it is seen that the climate of a country regulates the food habits of its people and influences their characters as well.

The climate of India is generally hot. So most of the people of our country live on rice and vegetables. The climate of our country has made us peace-loving and non-violent. The climate of a country has considerable influence on the characters of its people. The difference between the characters of the nations of Asia, Europe and Africa is due mainly to the different climatic conditions of these continents.

(569 words)

192. India : a unity in diversity (IAS '59, Misc '74)

It is a great paradox that India has one unity amongst so many diversities which are manifest in every sphere. The people of various States of India differ from one another in race and figure, food and clothing and in language. There is little in common to outward seeming between the Punjabis of North India and the Tamils in the far South. It is fascinating to find how the Bengalees, the Marathas, the Gujaratis, the Malayalis, the Punjabis, the Kashmiris, the Rajputs and the great Central block comprising the Hindusthani-speaking people have retained their peculiar characteristics for hundreds of years, and yet have been throughout these ages distinctively Indian, with the same national heritage and the same set of moral and mental qualities. A common language which is a prime factor in building up a sense of unity in a community is wanting here. Indian Constitution recognised 15 regional languages and Hindi as the official language but still Hindi could not occupy the position of *lingua franca* yet. There is a wide difference in religion professed by different groups of people, but India is a secular State, which shows no special preference to any particular religion.

Political nationalism is a Western concept ; but culturally India has always been one. Indian civilization has always been based on religious and moral values. Herein lie its unity and its strength. Foreign invasions have not been able to obliterate it. The aim of life in India is not acquisition or pursuit of sensual pleasure but righteousness and perfection. By and large, the people are God-fearing, tolerant, full of charity and sympathy and used to simple unsophisticated living. The West has given a new way of life based on science and technology, parliamentary form of government and fundamental rights. But the Indian philosophy and ethical systems and the teachings of different religions paved the way of a peaceful coexistence with tolerance and broad unity of outlook. (320 words)

198. On keeping dogs, cats, birds and other pets

(WBCS '75)

Domestic animals are a source of pleasure, amusement and instruction to their owners and are deserving of considerate treatment. Most boys and girls are eager to have some pet of their own upon which they can lavish their affection. We can forget the worries and anxieties of life by associating ourselves with beautiful and innocent animals. Many people find pleasure in life by keeping pet animals.

Biographies of great men tell us that many of them were animal lovers. Love of animals is very common among men of letters. Thus Wordsworth, Coleridge, Hardy and Saratchandra were great animal lovers.

Dogs enjoy great popularity as pets because they are the most intelligent and faithful animals. Man's love for dogs has been celebrated in our great epic "The Mahabharata". The epic poet shows a dog accompanying the Pandavas when they withdrew from the world and undertook a long journey towards Heaven. In the eighteenth century most of the British ladies kept pet dogs. Pope, a great poet of that age, has given humorous description of young ladies' fondness for lap-dogs in his famous mock-heroic poem "The Rape of the Lock". Now-a-days people keep dogs for fear of thieves. Dogs keep strict watch on their masters' houses at night. The dog has been called the

friend of man. They are not only cleverer than most other animals but also very loving and faithful if treated with kindness. They will follow their masters everywhere and will often defend even at the cost of their own lives.

Cats are lovely creatures. They are very fond of merrymaking. People keep cats mainly because they are a source of amusement. During leisure hours one may relax one's mind by watching the playful tricks of pet cats and kitten. Children are very fond of playing with cats. Sometimes cats are kept in a house in order to kill rats. Thus these delightful pets also render valuable services to their masters. Cats are different from dogs in character. While dogs love persons, cats love places of comforts. Children also keep rabbits for pastimes.

Birds are perhaps the most beautiful creatures on earth. How many bird-lyrics have been written by the English poets ! The cuckoo, the skylark and the nightingale fired the imagination of the great romantic poets like Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats. In many homes birds are kept as pets. In our country many people keep parrots and other talking birds. These birds are taught how to utter names of gods. They easily pick up the words which they frequently hear. In rural areas pigeons are also kept as pets. The pigeon is a very common bird and is found almost in all countries. Pigeons are bred and kept for food or for pastimes. The dove is taken by poets as the bird of meekness and love. It is very pleasant to hear doves cooing or crooning on a warm sleepy afternoon.

Other pet animals include cows, buffaloes, goats, horses etc. They are bred and kept more for their services and usefulness than for pastimes.

In the busy work-a-day world we are always passing through anxieties and troubles. We have become restless creatures. We stand badly in need of mental relaxation. Pet animals can give us innocent pleasures in our spare time. Like children, pet animals are infinitely delightful ; and they always brighten the homes in which they are kept. (562 words)

194. Requirements for a happy life (WBCS '75)

“Happiness is an occasional episode in the general drama of

pain." The sentence occurs in one of the novels of Thomas Hardy, and it finely sums up views of most men on happiness in human life. Indeed, life is a battle-field, and we are engaged in a grim struggle for existence. It is very difficult to achieve happiness in life. Many conditions must be fulfilled before a man can be reasonably happy.

Health and money are primary requirements for a happy life. Life shines in activities. A healthy man leads an active life, and he is happy. On the other hand a sickly man has the tendency to withdraw from the battle-field of life, and he leads a passive life. Passive life is another name for death. One who wants to enjoy life must improve one's health by taking physical exercise regularly. Money is also an important factor in a happy life. Adequate financial resources are necessary for a happy life. As Hazlitt, the famous English essayist, puts it : "It is hard to be without money. To get on without it is like travelling in a foreign country without a passport—you are stopped, suspected, and made ridiculous at every turn, besides being subjected to the most serious inconveniences." The want of money may ruin an otherwise happy life.

"Plain living and high thinking" is the key to happiness in life. In the present age of material civilization men become unhappy by trying to enjoy too many gifts of science. They forget that material comforts of life do not bring happiness. Happiness lies in limiting aspirations. Wise men of the East and the West have taught us through the ages that a man who wants to be happy must lead a simple life. Thus Vidyasagar, Gandhiji and Abraham Lincoln led very simple lives. High thinking is also necessary for happiness in life. A man who cherishes noble ideals in life is always happy. Life without ideals is the life of a beast.

In order to become happy in life a man should have a resourceful mind and he should cultivate some hobbies. An imaginative man finds many sources of happiness in art and nature. Literature, painting, and other fine arts sweeten human life. One should develop one's aesthetic sense in order to enjoy the beautiful objects of art. One should remember that a thing of beauty is a joy for ever. Nature is a fountain of joy.

All men may find pleasure amid beautiful surroundings of nature. A man in whose heart love of nature has been implanted will never become unhappy. Hobbies play an important role in a happy life. Everybody should cultivate some creative hobbies like gardening or stamp-collecting. The hobby is a release from the drudgery of one's daily life.

Finally, a philosophical outlook on life is necessary for happiness. Life is a tragedy to the man who feels and a comedy to the man who thinks. Hazlitt has admirably expressed the thought that arises in the mind of a really happy man. "If I can live to think, and think to live, I am satisfied."

(519 words)

195.

On Gossiping

(WBCS '75)

A word of explanation is necessary for the word 'gossip' (verb) before we embark on discussion of this topic. Its original form was 'godsib', and its meaning was 'godfather' or 'intimate friend'. The word 'godsib' has become 'godsip' and then 'gossip' on account of obscurity of compound. It has undergone pejorative sense-development because now it means simply 'idle talker' or 'idle talk'. Again, the word illustrates the grammatical phenomenon known as conversion, that is, the transfer of a word from one grammatical category to another. The verb 'to gossip' has been formed from the noun 'gossip' in the sense of 'to talk idly'. So gossiping means the habit of indulging in idle talk. In Bengali we have the popular word 'adda' for gossiping.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries life was full of leisure, and gossiping was cultivated as a form of art. Samuel Johnson was the greatest literary figure of England in the eighteenth century. But today we remember him for his idle talk as preserved in the pages of his biography. In our country Vidyasagar, Sarat Chandra and Nazrul were fond of gossiping. Gone are the good old days when men assembled in the evening and indulged in gossiping with carefree minds. In busy world of today we seldom find leisure. With the loss of leisure in our lives the art of gossiping has declined considerably.

All types of people cannot gossip well. In order to master

the art of gossiping two things are essential. First, an ideal idle talker should have a suggestive mind. Second, he should have a true sense of humour. A man whose mind is comprehensive rather than suggestive will not find delight in gossiping. The idle talker does not examine any subject seriously. He makes casual remarks. Sometimes his statements contain half-truths and lies. But they are always packed with humour.

Gossiping is one of the finest ways of spending our spare time. Our minds and nerves require relaxation after day's work. Gossiping provides our minds with a feast of nonsense. When we gossip with our friends, our minds enjoy freedom from seriousness. A few hours spent in gossiping freshen our minds and enable us to do serious things cheerfully.

Gossiping stands contrasted with debates and discussions. In a debate the speakers display intellectual brilliance by advancing logical arguments. Similarly, a serious discussion involves cerebral exercise. Debates and discussions make us mentally tired. But gossiping relaxes and refreshes our minds. Again, gossiping should not be bracketed with back-biting and scandal-mongering. Back-biting and scandal-mongering are destructive, but gossiping is creative. It contains germs of essays and belles-letters. Dr. Johnson defined the essay as the loose sally of the mind. Charles Lamb, the prince of essayists, created the atmosphere of after-dinner conversations in his famous *Essays of Elia*.

Gossiping is one of the innocent pleasures of life known to mankind since pre-historic times. The art of gossiping flourished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is neglected in the present age of hurry. But we should try to revive it because it alone can give us temporary holiday from stress and strain of life which have increased considerably in recent times.

(526 words)

196. Brevity is the soul of wit (WBCS '75)

This statement is correct in its entirety as a really intelligent person is capable of expressing himself within the minimum possible words. It is easy to go on writing pages on a certain subject and less intelligent and mediocre persons

adopt this course. But to say something within the fewest possible words is an art, which is not taught but comes from heart. Without wasting a single word, an intelligent person arranges a number of diverse ideas in the most systematic, rational and convincing manner. He is able to make it interesting and transports its readers to other lands and makes them forget their real surroundings.

Wit and humour are the expression of the ridiculous element of life. Wit is a sudden flash, an electric spark, a stroke of lightning. Humour is a glowing flame, a steady, smiling warmth. The good anecdote, the witty joke and the successful humorous story can appeal to all of us at all ages. No conversation is complete without them. They satisfy our mental appetite, and enable us to digest the more serious parts of the discourse.

A good style in writing is one that arouses curiosity at the beginning, maintains it throughout and satisfies it in the end. The literary work which provides the reader with a good mental excitement and subsequent relief, is one of the real pleasures of life. This is true whether you are writing a poem, a story, a drama, a biography, or a magazine article. The elements of a good style are—honesty, simplicity, brevity, clearness, coherence, vividness and fire. The third essential of a good style is brevity. The day of the novelist with the long words and the long sentences is gone. The tempo of life is too fast. As a matter of fact the mind has always travelled faster than the body. The greatest writers with their brief phrases hurry the mind of reader along on the wings of imagination. The most universally remembered passages in Homer, in Shakespeare, in the Bible, in Dickens, in Emerson, in Stevenson, are the passages that move the mind most rapidly. And the quality that gives them their rapid motion is brevity—brevity in word, in phrase and in sentence.

In the case of Dramas and Plays also, those will be better with fewer characters and less scenery and shorter speeches. Brevity in the drama is the soul of wit.

Yet one must avoid excessive brevity. Impressionistic plays

whose characters talk in symbolic and half-expressed inuendos, are as a rule unsuccessful.

In dialogues also brilliant conversation should be avoided and those should be 'smart' and brief. In the case of a journalist also the style will be photographic and graphic. The newspaper story must be almost telegraphic in its brevity and yet it must tell a complete and interesting story. Public is no longer interested in drab reports of the news. Brevity is the motto in the newspaper editorial column. Wit and humour are important not only in the news item but in the feature story also.

Thus one should avoid exaggeration and flowery expressions and should practise brevity in speech and writing so that wit and humour thereof are fully appreciated by all. (541 words)

197.

Greater Calcutta

(Misc '76)

Calcutta, once a premier city in the East, has in recent years become a straggling, over-populated city with all its aftereffects. From the day the city was founded by Job Charnock, it has just grown at random and at a time when modern town-planning was almost unknown in this country. Development of industries brought further congestion in Calcutta-Howrah complex on both sides of the river Hooghly. The effect of World War II followed by the partition of old Bengal and consequent influx of refugees from East Pakistan further increased the problems of Calcutta.

Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation was set up in June, 1961 to rebuild Greater Calcutta covering an area of about 400 sq. miles with amenities and opportunities for a healthy, happy and economically viable habitat comprising 2 Corporations, 33 municipalities and 37 urban units on both sides of the River Hooghly. A statutory authority known as the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority was established in Sept. 1970 to implement speedily the development schemes in Greater Calcutta area.

The CMDA has made significant contribution in the field of water-supply, sewerage and drainage, transportation, garbage-removal and construction of roads. Over 14 lakhs slum people are getting the benefit of pure drinking water, sanitary latrines,

paved roads and electricity through their bustee improvement schemes. Three bridges and a subway at Howrah Station and the Brabourne Road Fly-Over have greatly helped the traffic circulations in the city. The CMDA has undertaken development of three townships at West Howrah, East Calcutta and Baishnabghata-Patuli. The progress of Bidhan Nagar (Salt lake) as administrative-cum-residential complex is worth mentioning.

The Tube Railway Project and the Second Hooghly Bridge, when completed, will solve the transport and traffic problems of the city to a great extent. Installation of a TV centre places Calcutta among the principal cities of India. If along with these all-round developments, the twin problems of poverty and unemployment can be tackled in a better way, the city of Calcutta will undoubtedly regain its past glory. (315 words,

198.

Street-names

(Misc '76)

For proper identification of any locality in a town or city, every street or road is required to be given a specific name of its own. It is wrong to suppose that street-names are arbitrarily given having no significance. Some streets like Northern Avenue, Southern Avenue and Central Avenue pin-point the particular region of this vast metropolis. College Street in Calcutta indicates the presence of a group of colleges in the vicinity. Some of the areas in old Calcutta were named after the original settlers. Muchipara was the locality of the cobblers, Colootolla of kalus or oil-pressers, Kumartolla of potters, Cotton Street of cotton-dealers.

Roads are also named after local heroes or big people or illustrious persons of the locality and there are innumerable instances of such names having been used in roads, lanes and by-lanes. Formerly many of the streets of Calcutta were named after Viceroy and Governors of British India and Chief Justices of the old Supreme Court in Calcutta. After independence these are being renamed by some illustrious personages. Thus Cornwallis Street was renamed Bidhan Sarani, Harrison Road renamed Mahatma Gandhi Road, Clive Street renamed Netaji Subhas Road, Amherst Street renamed Raja

Rammohan Sarani. Many Roads and Streets have been named or renamed to commemorate great patriots and martyrs, noted lawyers, doctors, and Justices, saints, dedicated souls and benefactors. B. B. D. Bag or Binoy-Badal-Dinesh Bag is the newest name of what was formerly called Dalhousie Square. Colootolla Street has been renamed Surya Sen Street. Ochterlony Monument on the Maidan was renamed Sahid Minar and the Anderson House was renamed Bhabani Bhavan. Willingdon Bridge was renamed Vivekananda Bridge. Chowringhee Road was renamed Jawaharlal Nehru Road. Chitpur Road was renamed Rabindra Sarani. Upper and Lower Circular Roads were named Acharyya Prafulla Chandra Roy Road and Acharyya Jagadish Chandra Bose Road respectively.

Though usually a street is named after national leaders, there are instances where tributes are paid to the greatmen of the world. Thus Dharamatala Street was renamed Lenin Sarani, Theatre Road was named Shakespeare Sarani and Harrington Street was named Ho Chi Minh Sarani.

Perhaps these street-names are apt to conjure up sweet memories of the past by reminding us of great personalities and their great deeds in various spheres of life. (324 words)

199. Old and new energy-sources (WBCS '76)

Man has come a long way from the primitive age. In the early stage of human history, when man did not have the blessing of science, he satisfied his barest needs by his crude means. He wanted to light a fire for dispelling darkness, for scaring away a wild beast or for roasting the raw flesh and he used his flint stone for the purpose. As civilization advanced came the use of fire from wood and coal. The invention of steam and its use as energy changed the condition of the country considerably.

The steam engine and the steamship took much smaller time for carrying people from one part of earth to another. The discovery of petrol, gasoline and kerosine oil opened up new energy-sources for lighting, cooking and carrying purposes. These energy sources helped the driving of motor cars as well

as aeroplanes. Stoves, kerosine lamps and gas cylinders served as energy sources for cooking and similar other purposes. From the time of its appearance electricity made a strong foothold as a source of energy. Electric power can be generated by using coal when it is called Thermal Power, by using falling waters when it is called Hydel or Hydro-electric power and by using Atomic fuel. Electricity regulates the clock that rouses us from bed ; boils the water that makes our bed-tea ; cooks our food on heaters or cooking ranges ; works the radio that tell us the news ; takes us to our upper floors in a multi-storied mansion on electric lifts or on automatic escalators ; carries thousands of people over long distances on electric railway and heavy goods to inaccessible places on electric ropeway ; lights our rooms at night and cools us in summer ; in short does everything for our comfort and convenience.

Hydel Power is cheaper than Thermal Power, but hydro-electric power stations can be set up only where rapid flow of water throughout the year is ensured. Water is initially stored in reservoirs on a hill-top and as it is made to rush down it rotates huge turbines which in turn moves the rotor of generators thereby producing electricity. But the major portion of our electricity is produced from coal in Thermal Plants.

The fuel resources of the world are fast dwindling and the world will be saved from serious problem if the atomic energy serves as an alternative source of power. A new era in human history opened when the atomic energy was harnessed to the peaceful uses of man. Many countries including India, are now preparing for generating electricity from this Atomic Plant. The Atomic-powered American submarines, *Nautilus* and *Skate*, sailed successfully under the polar ice-cap. Atomic energy can also be utilised in locomotives and aircrafts. The space conquest has much advanced due to the invention of this nuclear energy.

The research and development in the field of solar energy is being given highest priority in view of its vital need to meet the future requirements of the country. This solar energy may be utilised in solar pumps, solar dryers of agricultural produce

and forest timber, desalination of water and conversion of brackish water into potable water and power generation.

The role of petrol and diesel as sources of energy, especially in transport services and in running automobiles and aeroplanes, cannot be over-emphasized. The oil crisis and the galloping prices of crude oil stirred the whole world. Every country is now striving for oil explorations in new fields on land or in deep basin zones and also for exploring the means for alternative fuel sources. (588 words.)

200. The art of friendship (WBCS '76, IAS '75)

Man does not live in isolation. His life has relevance only when it touches the lives of other human beings. It means friendship is essential. Good manners and behaviours often help in developing friendship with others, while ill-temper and rough attitude make them unfriendly.

To make friendship with men of different tastes, callings and academic acumen is really an art, which everybody cannot acquire. There are persons having a galore of friends around them and others having none by their side. A bosom friend is an asset to anybody because a man can open his heart and tell his secrets to such friends alone who do not desert them in times of need or cherish any malice or jealousy against him and who would be ready to 'make any kind of sacrifice for him. There is difference between acquaintances and friends. Acquaintances may be many in number but friends are rather very limited. Acquaintances are superficial but friends are related by bond of love. Moreover there is difference between a flatterer and a real friend. The former generally keeps company with the rich or well-to-do person with the motive of getting some patronage, but a real friend is free from any such motive and hence he can befriend a rich or a poor person alike.

Friendship increases happiness and diminishes misery. When we do well, it is delightful to have friends who would be proud of our success. For the friendless man the attainment of wealth, power and honour is of little value. When fortune has inflicted a heavy blow upon us, our grief is alleviated.

ted by friendly solace and sympathy and their very presence would make us think that life is still worth living. On the contrary, the friendless man stands alone, exposed without protection to his enemies, and finds it difficult to overcome the blows of fortune.

Thus in good and evil fortune, in our work and our hours of leisure, the possession of true friends is the most important means to the attainment of happiness and the alleviation or avoidance of misery. It must be remembered, however, that these remarks only apply to friends really worthy of the name. Thus right selection of friends is a matter of vital importance. We should select our friends with the greatest care, and when we have own them and found them worthy, we should take care to retain them till we are severed from them by death.

Like love, true friendship lasts a lifetime, knowing no decay and death. It shines above the petty politics and selfish interests of human beings: narrow minds never enjoy it but noble minds spread it by night and day, not caring for the hardship it entails. There are many things which a man can divulge to a friend only, who is another himself, frankly and without shame.

There are different opinions on how to cultivate the art of friendship. According to some, one should aim at making friends with all men, high and low, rich and poor, with a broad smile on one's lips, shaking off shyness, diffidence and reserved in the four winds. Another view is one should try to pose a silent listener thus giving others a chance to speak and shine, and thus will make a sudden, yet lasting, bond of friendship with one virtually unknown a while ago. Reciprocity in manners and treatment among them would be essential for a lasting friendship. (573 words)

CHAPTER II

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF A DAILY NEWSPAPER

1. Write a letter in about 300 words to the Editor of a newspaper commenting on student unrest in West Bengal, and suggest ways and means for proper handling of the situation arising out of it.

(WBCS '68, CL. '58, '66)

To

The Editor, Amrita Bazar Patrika, Calcutta.

Sir,—It is a disquieting factor that in recent violent happenings in several parts of the country, active parts were played by groups of students in acts of vandalism and destruction. Student indiscipline today is visible in all categories of students from University to the primary school and both in urban and rural areas. Their indisciplined behaviour is no longer restricted to educational premises only but affects the community as a whole. Most of the students' agitations are now-a-days not related to any academic problem at all. A flimsy ground is sometimes good enough to provoke them to indulge in open and organised defiance of law. Thus they cause disturbances on railways and other public transport when tickets are demanded, disturb examinations if questions are not within their knowledge, assault investigators for detecting malpractices, launch strikes against the appointment or removal of teachers, and indulge in many other anti-social activities on various pretexts. Our Schools and Colleges and Universities have failed to develop the academic atmosphere and to foster among the students the high sense of responsibility, tolerance and respect for others. Moral standards are rapidly deteriorating and teachers of today do not uphold any ideal before the students. The training of children at home is far from satisfactory at

E. E. & C.—I

present. The contending political parties frequently exploit the emotional youths for their own ends. The youths have also no noble ideal to pursue, no heartening prospect to look for. They also see the corrupt practices and hypocritical professions of the leaders of our society and grow restive to remove these ills at any cost.

Unless the root causes are removed no amount of scathing indictment will stem the rising tide of indiscipline among students. There should be some agency which should look into the grievances of students and take steps to remove them with sympathy and understanding. Students' participation in politics should be restricted and a code of conduct for the students should be worked out.

(325 words)

Yours faithfully,

X Y Z

2. You have been a victim in a major railway accident. Write a letter to the Editor of a newspaper narrating your experiences and adding your comments.

(WBCS '62)

To

The Editor, Amrita Bazar Partika.

Sir,

I shall be obliged if you can spare a little space in your columns for the following. I am one of the victims of the recent Railway accident that resulted in serious loss of life. I am writing this in the hope that the Railway authorities should be more vigilant so that a similar accident may not happen in future. I was travelling by that ill-fated train in a Second Class compartment. The train started from the Howrah Station at about 9 p. m. My compartment was fairly crowded, still I was able to make some room for myself and immediately fell asleep because the day had been a very tiring one. At midnight I experienced a severe jolt and was thrown down on the floor from my berth. The

compartment was in complete darkness and piercing cries broke the stillness of the night. For sometime I could not make out what had actually happened. By and by my eyes got used to the darkness and I realised that a severe railway accident had taken place. Fortunately I had escaped unhurt. Somehow I got down from the compartment along with a few others and was confronted with a horrible scene outside. The train had been passing over a culvert when it gave way and some of the carriages in front were completely wrecked, resulting in heavy loss of life and severe injuries to many. Cries and groans of the wounded rent the darkness. Everything was in utter confusion and it was with great difficulty that I and my companions could make our way through the debris and the bodies of the dead and the wounded strewn all over the place. We removed some of the injured persons from under the wreckage. It was a long wait before the relief train arrived.

Railway accidents are not uncommon in our country. When they occur there is agitation in the Press and on the platform against the callousness and negligence of the authorities. This goes on for some time and then every one forgets it except the people who are directly affected. The authorities try to exculpate themselves by the theory of sabotage. In the present case also I find that the theory of sabotage has been advanced by the Railway authorities to free themselves from blame. But I strongly suspect that the Railway people had been negligent about their duty to keep the culvert and the track in proper condition. A public enquiry conducted by men of unimpeachable integrity alone can remove the cloud of suspicion that has settled upon the mind of people who were present at the scene of occurrence. If, as a result of such enquiry, the Railway authorities are brought to their senses, this letter will not have been written in vain.

(463 words)

Yours etc.
X Y Z

3. Write a letter of about 200 words to the Editor of a local newspaper commenting on frequent traffic dislocation due to procession etc., and give some concrete suggestions for improvement

(WBCS '67)

To

The Editor, The Statesman.

Sir,

Very rightly Nehru called Calcutta a city of processions. On almost all occasions long processions are brought out which dislocate the traffic and put the city-dwellers to much harrassment. Traffic dislocation paralyses a city and upsets the normal courses of life and when it becomes as frequent as it is now everybody starts feeling that it is time something should be done about it.

On Monday last a long procession of factory workers was brought out at about five in the afternoon and there was a long traffic jam near Subodh Mullick Square. Many had to walk home. The ladies and the old were the worst sufferers. But what really annoyed us most was that an ambulance was detained by this traffic jam. One doubts if the processions that are brought on festive occasions are really justified. The immersion ceremonies of the different gods and goddesses continue for days and the whole city suffers from frequent traffic dislocations that they cause.

It is high time that some restrictions are imposed on processions and public demonstrations. No processions should be allowed in the peak-hours. Moreover, demonstrations on the main roads should be banned, and immersion ceremonies should not be allowed to continue for days.

(203 words)

Yours faithfully,

X Y Z

4. Write a letter of about 400 words to the Editor of a newspaper about the difficulties of railway travel in our country and suggestions for improvement. (CL '55, '67)

To

The Editor, The Statesman.

Sir,

Railway travel in India now-a-days is almost a nightmare. My work necessitates extensive travelling and the many hazards of railway travel that I have been subjected to make me feel that it is time a voice is raised in protest.

Over-crowding of trains has made the chance of a comfortable journey very remote indeed. The first lesson that railway travel seems to teach is that might is right ; one has to push, elbow and literally fight one's way to a compartment. Travelling with luggage is too much of a luxury these days ; kids and ladies should not preferably accompany one in this death-defying venture. One undertaking a long railway journey finds inadequate meals for days. Many of the trains do not have dining-car and even those that have provide food of much inferior quality. Having a good and comfortable bath during a railway journey is also thought of as not very essential by the railway authorities, since the toilets are dirty and inadequate.

The lack of civic sense in fellow travellers makes the journey even more uncomfortable and disgusting. Most of the travellers are only concerned with their own comfort, and do not care if they are causing any inconvenience to others. They would try to have the entire compartment to themselves, and would be very reluctant to make room for others. When they would eat something they would scatter the left-overs all around and make the compartment as dirty as possible. They would shout, they would take advantage for our gentlemanliness and pick up quarrel for nothing.

It is high time that something is done to improve the standard of railway travel in India. The examples of the

European countries may especially be followed. Railway journey in those countries is many times more comfortable than what it is in India. The stations are cleaner, the trains are less crowded and better equipped with the essentials and the travellers have also better civic senses. Railway journey in our country can be made more comfortable only when this over-crowding is controlled and good food and adequate bath-room and water closets are provided. The number of trains should be increased to avoid over-crowding. Persons who are indifferent or cause inconvenience to others should be put to their senses. Some attending staff should also move in trains to look after the comforts and difficulties of the passengers. Lastly, some more attention of the railway authorities for the welfare of the passengers is needed.

(410 words)

Yours etc.

A. B. C.

5. Write a letter (of about 400 words) to the Editor of a newspaper pleading for the introduction of compulsory military training for students in India. (CL '60)

To

The Editor, The Statesman.

Sir,

I congratulate you for your excellent editorial which appeared in yesterday's issue of your esteemed Paper on the compulsory military training for Indian youths. I crave the hospitality of your columns for a few comments on the subject.

There has been of late considerable controversy regarding wide-spread indiscipline among our students. It is futile to seek to apportion blame, for many things have contributed to the deplorable state of affairs. The causes are far more deep-rooted than they appear. Besides political and economic factors, the growing frustration among our youths is, to

my mind, mainly responsible for lack of discipline in them. Unemployment, dearth of facilities for profitable training and ever-increasing percentage of failures at examinations are leading to an alarming increase in the number of indolent youths. Compulsory military training can provide occupation to such youths and instil a sense of discipline and patriotism in them.

Compulsory military training of our students is of special importance at this time when the defence of our borders has become a live issue in consequence of threats from the north and from our closest neighbour. The defence of the country is safe in the hands of our formidable army, but we have to be prepared for emergencies in these uncertain times and a second line of defence provided by our Territorial Army and other non-combatant units is bound to be of utmost importance. This will ensure adequate supply of trained men and officers in the regular army in the event of conflict breaking out again anywhere on the borders.

Besides, the old idea of recruitment of military personnel from the so-called martial classes and races in the country has long been discredited as outmoded and out-dated, because experience has proved that aptitude for military duty is not the monopoly of any particular race or class. Other sources of supply of men for the army have to be tapped and compulsory training should be enforced without distinction of class or race. The present system of military training as National Cadet Corps in School and College life and as Territorial Army in the post-student life, being voluntary, has not become very popular among the youths. The military training, if made compulsory in school or college curriculum, will make the nation sturdy, disciplined, patriotic and ready for the supreme sacrifice. The students and the intelligentsia of the country will, with proper training, make excellent soldiers and military officers.

(414 words)

Yours truly,
X Y Z

6. Write a letter (in about 300 words) to the editor of a newspaper complaining of the bad quality and inadequate supply of drinking water in your locality. (Misc '67, '74)

Sir,

Through your esteemed daily I would like to draw the attention of our municipal authorities to the following.

On behalf of the inhabitants of the Kharagpur Municipality area, I complain of the bad quality and inadequate supply of drinking water in our locality. A few days ago two of my neighbours died of cholera. At present there are some typhoid patients in our area. Most of the children of our locality suffer from dysentery. Everybody knows that cholera, typhoid and dysentery are caused by water-borne germs. On scientific examination of the drinking water supplied in our locality germs of cholera, typhoid and dysentery were found in it. The drinking water which we fetch from roadside taps is always muddy. Now-a-days the municipal authorities do not consider it to be their duty to supply filtered water. They say that they cannot supply properly filtered water on account of non-availability of alum. So the people of our locality have to drink muddy water in all seasons. Inadequate supply of drinking water is another difficulty of our locality. In other municipal areas of Midnapore district drinking water is supplied twice a day ; but in our locality we get water only in the morning. There is no afternoon supply of drinking water in our locality. Many inhabitants of our area have to drink water of their wells. Load-shedding has made the problem of drinking water acute in our locality. When there is load-shedding our locality does not get any drinking water.

The municipal authorities have recently increased taxes. We are paying enhanced taxes, but we do not get adequate quantities of filtered water. If the municipal authorities do not take proper steps for supplying adequate quantities of properly filtered drinking water, which is the essential

responsibility of a municipality, the rate-payers will be compelled to stop paying municipal taxes in the near future.

(309 words)

Yours faithfully,

X. Y. Z.

7. Write a letter of about 200 words to the editor of a newspaper, commenting on the present state of hospitals in West Bengal and suggesting improvements. (WBCS '70)

To

The Editor, The Amrita Bazar Patrika.

Sir,

I crave the hospitality of your esteemed columns to bring to light the unhappy state of affairs of hospitals in West Bengal.

There are frequent newspaper reports concerning the unfortunate people who died in hospital campus because they were denied admission by the hospital authorities on one ground or another. Whatever might be the difficulty, on humanitarian grounds all endeavours should be made by the hospital authorities to make room for a helpless patient.

The outdoor patients suffer greatly because they have to wait for hours before they are attended to by the physicians. It is stated that there is a dearth of physicians in the outdoor. Only the privileged and the influential people manage to get quick admission and proper attention of the requisite authorities. The poor and common people are not properly attended to in the outdoor and they have to wait long for admission in the indoor. In the rural areas the hospitals are hardly equipped with modern instruments or even with electricity. There are few beds or doctors available in those hospitals.

The Government should employ more physicians to man the outdoor departments and provide for enough beds in the hospitals and electricity and better equipments in the rural areas as immediate measures of relief.

(210 words)

Yours faithfully,

A. B. C.

8. Write a letter (in about 300 words) to the editor of a newspaper about the frequent failure of electric supply in the locality where you live.

(Misc 72)

To

The Editor, The Statesman.

Sir,

I would like to draw the attention of our Government to the frequent failure of electric supply in our locality through your esteemed daily.

Our locality is an industrial area of Howrah town. In recent times many unemployed engineers of our locality have set up small factories. There are a large number of motor-repairing shops and other small industries and printing presses in this locality. Now-a-days the life of our locality is frequently paralysed by the failure of electric supply. Power failure compels the inhabitants of our locality to stop work. Owners of small factories are passing through hard times because they have to pay usual wages to their employees though work is frequently stopped owing to power failure. Poor motor mechanics are hard hit as a result of power failure.

Failure of electric supply at night turns our locality into a hell. Thieves and eve-teasers freely indulge in their anti-social activities in the darkness of the night. The students who are fairly accustomed with bright light of electric lamps and tubelights find it difficult to study at night during power failure. Perhaps the worst sufferers of our locality are the commerce students who cannot attend their classes in the evening section of Colleges when electric supply is cut off. The shopkeepers also suffer a lot financially due to fall in sale during darkness. Some big industries force partial lay-off during such periodical power shortage thereby reducing the wages of labourers.

We have repeatedly requested the authorities of the local power house to maintain a regular supply of electricity

in our locality. But they always blame the D. V. C. and Durgapur authorities for the frequent failure of electric supply.

We, therefore, make this fervent appeal to the Government of West Bengal to mitigate our sufferings caused by frequent failure of electric supply.

(301 words)

Yours faithfully,

X Y Z

9. Write a letter of about 175 words to the editor of a newspaper, commenting on the programmes of All India Radio and suggesting improvements.

(WBCS '72)

To

The Editor, The Statesman.

Sir,

All India Radio has a very important role to play in our everyday life. It can not only entertain, but also educate people through a series of programmes. Though some of the regular features (e. g. Krishikathar Asar etc.) are both entertaining and educative, some other programmes, such as, Yubabani (Bengali and English) and 'For the Universities' leave enough rooms for improvements. Unless the vital problems of the youths, the correlation between education and unemployment and planning of future life are properly discussed most of the broadcasts are likely to give a stereotype and dull impression. Instead of having discussions exclusively amongst youths, if some men of consequence are roped in the discussion to answer the questions of the youths it could be more fruitful. Programmes of selected music (Anurodher Asar) should be properly selected not to allow too many repetitions. Some selected dramas with popular artistes should be played on the Radio to make it attractive. There should be more of radio-reporting (with-on-the-spot study) on various institutions of cultural and social import to acquaint the listeners with them.

Yours faithfully,

X. Y. Z.

(179 words)

10. Write a letter of about 175 words to the Editor of a newspaper commenting on the present crisis in education in Indian Universities. (Sign as X. Y. Z.).
(WBCS '73)

To

The Editor, The Amrita Bazar Patrika.

Sir,

We were shocked to read an account of the violent demonstrations by the students inside the campus of the Lucknow University in yesterday's issue of your newspaper. A few days ago the Statesman published an account of an attack of the students of the Allahabad University on their teachers. Similar incidents also occurred in the Burdwan and the Calcutta Universities in recent years. These things have now become a daily occurrence in Indian Universities.

If one closely watches the activities of our students, one will inevitably arrive at the conclusion that academic work has practically stopped in our Universities. In most of the colleges and Universities students are totally indifferent to studies. They do not care to attend their classes regularly. They indulge in party politics and devote most of their time and energy to Union activities. They frequently organize strikes and processions. They create disturbances in examination halls and copy answers from help books.

A nation cannot progress without proper education. The future of India will be bleak if the government remains indifferent to the present indiscipline and criminal activities of our students.

(183 words)

Yours faithfully,
X. Y. Z.

11. Write a letter of about 175 words to the editor of a newspaper commenting on Tourism in India.

(WBCS '74)

To

The Editor, The Statesman.

Sir,

India is an underdeveloped country. At present she stands badly in need of foreign exchange reserves to finance her development plans. In recent times the number of tourists visiting India has increased many times. But this is not enough, for our country has limitless tourist potentiality. There are many beautiful hills, valleys, rivers, lakes and seas in this country. There are also scattered all over India splendid temples, tombs and monuments. They have attracted travellers through the ages. There are Kashmir with the beautiful lake, Agra with the famous Taj Mahal, Ellora with the fabulous rock-cut caves, Konarak with the splendid Sun Temple, Darjeeling with the majestic Tiger Hill and Calcutta with the Victoria Memorial Hall and Belur Math.

But we have to remember that the foreigners who visit India for sight-seeing are accustomed to a luxurious way of life. So our government should take certain steps to remove the difficulties which the western travellers face in our country. The Central Government and the State Governments must see to it that tourists are not scared away by rough dealings and unreasonable charges.

(180 words)

Yours faithfully,
X. Y. Z.

12. Write a letter of about 175 words to the editor of a newspaper commenting on the division and dissension in public life which are a sad commentary on our national character and our national integrity.

(WBCS '75)

To

The Editor, The Statesman.

Sir,

We have been reading with deep concern the reports on division and dissension in public life in different States which have been appearing in your daily newspaper for the last few months. Your staff reporters tell us that in every State of our country there is division in public life.

The Indian National Congress was the ruling party in most of the States till the grand success of the Janata Party in March '77 ; but for quite sometime there was no unity among its leaders and workers. Even the leadership of Mrs. Gandhi failed to enforce discipline among her followers and division and dissension were rampant everywhere. She had even to dismiss some dissenters among her Cabinet colleagues. In many States prominent congressmen were expelled from the party. It is heartening that the Janata Party, though a combination of four major parties, has succeeded in achieving discipline and unity in the party. In all the major opposition parties including the Congress there is some sort of division among the leaders.

We proudly claim that our democracy is the largest in the world. If the division and dissension in our public life continue unabated, we shall lose our prestige in international spheres.

Yours faithfully,

(200 words)

X. Y. Z.

13. Write a letter (of about 175 words) to the editor of a daily newspaper expressing your views on the desirability or otherwise of the new Higher Secondary Course (Classes XI and XII) in West Bengal (WBCS '76)

To

The Editor, The Statesman.

Sir,

I was amazed to read the various criticisms and articles recently published in your esteemed paper against the introduction of the new Higher Secondary Course (Classes XI and XII) in this State. The main points of criticisms were that the existing system of eleven classes of school education followed by Three-Years of degree course was quite in order and there was no need for such an overall change in a hurry. The students will have to bear a heavy load and the period of study will be prolonged by one year.

I would point out that education must follow an all-India pattern and when 10 plus 2 plus 3 pattern has been accepted by most of the States, West Bengal cannot lag behind. In this new system, the students can branch off from the pure academic line to enter working life and students, who are not fit for higher education, may be eliminated at the 10 plus 2 stage. Moreover, it takes into account vocational education as part of the curricula. So the introduction of this new Higher Secondary Course has been the right move.

Yours faithfully,

(177 words)

X. Y. Z.

14. Write a letter of about 400 words to the Editor of a newspaper, discussing the transport problem that the common man has to face daily and suggesting ways of improvement. (CL '75)

To

The Editor, The Statesman.

Sir,

I am an inhabitant of College Row in Central Calcutta. I am a clerk of a government office located in the

Chowringhee area. So I know full well the nature of the transport problem that the common man has to face daily in the city of Calcutta.

In order to form a clear idea of the transport problem that the common man has to face in Calcutta one has to watch the scene at a bus or tram stop at 10 a. m. or 5 p. m. on any working day. As soon as a vehicle comes to the stop, many people run towards the entrance. Very few—only the young and the agile—can get a foothold, for the vehicle is already packed to capacity. The passengers who cannot wait for the next vehicle have to hang like bats with intricate gymnastic feats for their transportation. Some of them reach their destination with a torn shirt or a bruised toe. At present the number of commuters is nearly 1·2 million. The numbers of tram cars and buses are inadequate, and the growing road congestion reduces the number of trips and thereby reduces the number of total passengers carried. During the rainy season the transport problem that the common man has to face becomes acute. After a smart shower most of the roads look like pools. Most of the tram cars and buses stop plying. When there is a heavy shower, transport in the city comes to a standstill for hours. Students, office-goers and factory workers are put to much inconvenience.

In order to solve the transport problem that the common man has to face daily in Calcutta, concerted efforts on the part of different departments and a lot of money are required. Some suggestions to improve the situation may be made here. It is essential to increase the number of State Transport buses and tram cars. The transport authorities should issue more licences to private buses. More routes for Mini and Deluxe buses should be introduced. Proper steps should be taken to ensure that all the buses are on wheels every day and there is no midway break-down of buses. The Calcutta Corporation and C. M. D. A. should take the responsibility to maintain good roads in the city.

Drainage schemes should be taken up in water-logged areas. If these suggestions are accepted by the authorities concerned, the transport problem that the common man has to face daily may be solved.

(403 words)

Yours faithfully.

A. B. C.

15. Write a letter (in about 300 words) to the editor of a newspaper about the problem of street-begging in Calcutta
(Misc '75)

To

The Editor, The Statesman.

Sir,

Please allow me to voice the grievance of the general public on the problem of street-begging in Calcutta. Day by day, the beggars are out-growing in number and are becoming a taxation on our forbearance.

Some may have been driven to this by the blows of Fate or being victims of natural calamities, but the majority are professional beggars. The maimed and diseased persons and lepers are found begging near every temple and mosque. Some make fictitious sores on their person to excite public sympathy. Beggars are mostly pavement-dwellers and are dressed in dirty and filthy rags. Some of them are under the iron hands of agents, who make capital out of their collections. Thus a regular business is carried on, in which the beggars are used as tools. These beggars post themselves at every bus stop, tramway junction, near shops and street crossings, outside the examination hall, the hospitals and law-courts. Some of them are quite able-bodied and can earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, but they have adopted this profession as a source of earning without manual labour. There are teenager boys and girls begging alms from door to door. Some practise begging in the guise of sadhus and mendicants. All of them are social parasites.

E. E. & C.—II

As in Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, by enactment of law the vagrancy and begging in public should be totally banned in Calcutta and West Bengal. Government should start some poor houses for the maintenance of vagrants, loafers and beggars who are diseased and maimed or handicapped. The able-bodied persons should by law be compelled to join some work centres to earn their livelihood. Beggars suffering from infectious diseases should either be removed to hospitals or segregated in some colony set up for them. Beggars from other States should be repatriated to their home States.

The move for beautifying Calcutta cannot succeed unless this menace of street-begging is completely eradicated.

Yours faithfully,

(319 words)

X. Y. Z.

16. Write a letter of about 400 words to the editor of a newspaper describing the inconvenience experienced by the people during the rainy season due to badly damaged unrepai red roads of the city. Discuss among other points frequent occurrence of fatal accidents on the roads (CL '76)

To

The Editor, The Statesman.

Sir,

Through your much circulated esteemed daily, I wish to bring to the notice of the Government and the concerned authorities the inconvenience experienced by the general public in Calcutta, the cosmopolitan city, during the rainy season.

We live in a city which has been getting more and more congested day by day as more and more workshops, markets, offices are springing up and thousands of people come here as 'daily passengers' from other stations for various purposes. The main brunt is borne by the city streets on which ply countless number of buses, owned by

Government and private agencies, and lorries, taxis and private cars. Continuous movement of heavy wheels on the roads round the clock, requires immediate and instant repairings of holes which become veritable death-spots when monsoon starts. Buses and other vehicles are thus involved in accidents of which the passengers and often drivers fall innocent victims.

In the rainy season, there is an alarming increase in the number of accidents. If the Electric Supply Corporation or the C. M. D. A. men have dug up some parts of the road and the rain has caught them unawares, one is to blame one's own lot if one falls into such dug-outs and loses one's limb. It is also strange that the Corporation or the C. M. D. A. does not take up the repair of the streets before the rain sets in. On account of the rains, first the holes are filled with water, resembling mini-ponds and then roads and foot-paths merge into each, perhaps as a token of friendship, and become a vast sheet of water, to the untold suffering of the passers-by and passengers. Bus-journey is suspended and other vehicles like taxis, mini-buses find it impossible to ply. If there is any heavy shower, the communications are paralysed at once, all the trams remain standing in a row, quite motionless. On such occasions, the plight of office-goers is the most pitiable. They have to stride on foot through the vast sheet of water standing on the roads.

Since the rain water has hardly any outlet due to accumulated silt in the man-holes, the standing water sometimes reaches the height of man's waist. If there is any open man-hole submerged in water it is indeed a death-trap.

Only when the Government will wake up to this need of the hour, when arrangements will be made to repair the roads and to improve the drainage system, the common man may heave a heavy sigh of relief, not before.

(414 words)

Yours faithfully,
A. B. C.

CHAPTER III

OTHER LETTERS

1. Write a letter to your friend giving an account of a
Literary Conference which you attended
(WBCS '60)

Calcutta,
9th May, '77

My dear Ranajit,

I have been immensely delighted to have your letter after an unusually long interval. You desire me to give you an account of the Bengali Literary Conference held at Chinsura, which I attended as a delegate.

We were sure you would be coming to the Conference as a delegate from your home town, distinguished as you are as a writer and ardent lover of literature. Your absence, therefore, was a great surprise and disappointment.

The Conference was held in the spacious Assembly Hall of the local College and was very largely attended. We stayed in the different Delegates' Camps where all possible arrangements had been made for our comfort. We attended the meeting of the Subjects Committee in the morning of the first day when the agenda were tentatively fixed. In the afternoon the open session under the Presidency of a renowned novelist started and concluded after about four hours. The Chairman of the Reception Committee welcomed the guests and made special mention of the far-famed writers of the place and others who have illumined the Bengali literature in many ways. The Presidential address proved to be one of the most inspiring and informative addresses ever read at such Conferences.

On the following day, the Conference broke up into the sections of Literature, Philosophy, History, Juvenile

Literature and Cultural items. These functions continued for the third day when, in the evening the Conference concluded with a sumptuous dinner and a dramatic performance by the local talents. We came back with pleasant memories which will long abide in us. The poems, stories and articles read at the Conference along with the addresses of the President and the Chairman of the Reception Committee, are soon to be published in the form of a Brochure, a copy of which I shall send you as soon as I get one.

Trusting this finds you all right.

(312 words)

Yours affectionately,

X. Y. Z.

2. Write a letter (in about 300 words) to a friend describing a visit to a zoo or a museum or a circus show (Misc. '67)

- (i) Letter describing a visit to a zoo

Calcutta,
25th May, '77

My dear Pradip,

Thank you for your letter of the 15th instant. I am glad to learn that you fared very well in the last University examination.

Recently I had a recess for consecutive four days and after two days' rest I felt bored. It suddenly struck me that I hadn't visited the Calcutta Zoo for years and I thought that my holiday would be best utilised among the living animals and birds. I then picked up a company and went to the Zoological Garden in Alipore. Inside the garden are beautifully laid out fine trees, plants and ornamental lakes.

We started our round with a visit to the birds. Their infinite variety is indeed something to wonder at. I could identify only a few of them such as swallow, parrots,

partridge, snipe, pheasant, peacock. Their melodious songs suggested that no cage could hold their spirit within its narrow confines.

From the birds we went to the monkeys and chimpanzees. It was a move from the serious aspect of nature to its frolicsome side. We were simply charmed to see their mirthful cunning and pranks.

The lions and the tigers were the most fascinating objects. I thought they were majestic and powerful no doubt but what complete waste of strength, of muscle power and what tremendous beauty. There is a rare collection of white Usuri tiger, gifted by the Russians, which attracted a large crowd. Another noted specimen is the Polar bear, all white in complexion, residing in a specially built cottage. There is also a big collection of majestic elephants, leopards and panthers, rhinoceros, black and brown bear, sloth bear, spotted deer, sambur, black buck, zebra, hippopotamus, kangaroo, reptiles and other aquatic and amphibious animals. The animal collection of this Zoo is one of the finest in the world. It was a very pleasant day for me.

I invite you to visit this Zoo when you next come here.

(314 words)

Yours sincerely,

X. Y. Z.

(ii) Letter describing a visit to a museum

Calcutta,

25th May, '77

My dear Pradip,

In your last letter you asked me to write something about the Museum in Calcutta. I recently paid a visit to the Indian Museum and I am furnishing the details thereof.

This is an imposing building on Chowringhee Road, opened in 1875. The facade has three stories of great height in the Italian style of architecture with two projecting wings and the central portico. It is popularly called *Jadu Ghar*, that is a House of Wonders. There is a big lecture

hall, where eminent guest-speakers deliver lectures and students for higher studies come regularly. It is a store-house of knowledge.

I started my round with a visit to the wonderful collection of exhibits of archaeological interest in the ground floor. There are broken portions of pillars, monuments and statues and utensils of antiquities excavated from different places. Next I passed on to the room containing valuable collections of geological and mineralogical departments. I saw some meteors of different sizes and the Egyptian mummy. There are also some fossils and the models of the formation of coal underground.

Then I went to the zoological department in the first floor where I found stuffed mammals of all descriptions, birds, reptiles, fishes and scorpions. Even there are jaws of a whale and the models of some extinct prehistoric animals. In the third floor, there is a collection of models of aboriginal types of men from the hills and the islands of India with their boats, weapons and armour and models of their houses. The art gallery is very interesting. Besides, there is a very valuable library. The daily average of visitors to this museum is 600. In a word, without a visit to this museum our knowledge remains incomplete in many respects. I hope this will fully acquaint you with the museum, which is a glory of this city.

With good wishes.
(309 words)

Yours sincerely,
X. Y. Z.

(iii) Letter describing a visit to a Circus Show

Calcutta,
25th May. '77

My dear Pradip,

I am so glad to have your letter of the 15th instant. I am a bit curious to know why you have suddenly shifted from your old lodging.

Being attracted by the pomp and the grandeur of publicity through wall-posters and mike-propaganda, I visited yesterday the Great International Circus in the Marcus Square near College Street in Calcutta, where they put up a big tent. Inside, the seats were arranged in a huge circle with gallery at the back and chairs arranged in rows in front around the arena. It was all lit up with big lamps and flood lights and there was a big crowd to see the sights. The band played all the time.

First came in five fine horses and on their backs four men and a girl dressed very grandly. Then the riders got up and stood on the backs of the horses and displayed various feats. It was very fine and we cheered very much. Next items were the acrobatic feats and the balancing on the string which thrilled everyone. Three very funny clowns with their faces painted, made us laugh by their silly jokes all the time. Then two elephants were brought in and they did a lot of funny tricks; they sat down on tubs, stood up on two hind legs and nodded with their trunks.

There were also performing monkeys and dogs that played wonderful tricks. But the great thing was to see the tamed lions and tigers doing all kinds of thing at the command of a master with a long whip in hand. The other interesting things were the 'Looping-the-Loop', that is, a motor cycle at high speed moving horizontally and vertically within a closed spherical dome and the 'Death Drive' by a Jeep jumping across a big gap.

We had a very happy evening, and I was sorry when it was all over. Hope, you are all well.

(318 words)

Yours sincerely,

X. Y. Z.

3. * Write a letter to your younger brother (in about 300 words) instructing him to join the National Cadet Corps in his College (Misc. '68)

Krishnagar,
20th Aug. '76

My dear Pradip,

I am glad to learn that you are feeling quite happy about your admission into the 1st year degree class and your hostel accommodation in the College.

It appears from your letter that you are unwilling to join the National Cadet Corps in your College, mainly because you have been ill-advised by your friends who have upheld the difficulties of attending the N. C. C. parade at the Maidan in the early hours of the morning. For a boy of your intelligence and merit, you will understand that it cannot be a ground for not joining the N.C.C. You will see for yourself how baseless is the fear that once recruited to the N.C.C. you will not be able to devote yourself to serious studies and that in future you might be called upon to face the bullets in the battlefield. You very well know that shirkers always paint gloomy pictures of the reality. So tell your reluctant friends to join the N.C.C. along with you and go forward for a happy and disciplined life that provides enough fun and adventure. Now think for yourself, is not an open air drill quite good for health? And you do not have to attend the parade everyday. You look spirited and happy in your N.C.C. uniform, as you move about with a new gait.

Is not a training in first aid and use of fire-arms quite good for yourself? Do you not think that in times of emergency it is our duty to take up arms against our enemies? And who will be a better patriot than yourself, when you will have already been trained to use a gun against the enemy while others would merely wield their sticks? So, better say with pride that you are destined to be soldier in country's defence by joining the N.C.C.

With love and good wishes.

(309 words)

Your affectionate brother,
X. Y. Z.

4. Write a letter to your father (in about 300 words) telling him why you have offered yourself as a candidate for the present examination (Misc. '68)

Calcutta,
20th Aug. '76

. My dear father.

I am sure you will approve of my decision to sit for the competitive examination for recruitment to the posts of Inspectors and Secretariat Upper Division Assistants. For some time past, I keenly watched the advertisements in the newspapers and sent my applications for the posts but unfortunately I could not get any interview yet, not to speak of the job.

I have heard that it is a fair but stiff competitive examination and the selection is made by the Public Service Commission entirely on merit and it is free from any backing or influence. If I am fortunate to get any post through this examination, I am sure a promising career will be open before me. The successful candidates will get the job of the Inspector or of the Upper Division Assistant which is quite lucrative at least for those who dare not compete with the best talents that qualify in the Civil Service Examinations. The post of Inspector and of Secretariat Upper Division have all the privileges that accrue to a more or less decent government job. Especially there is security of service and some freedom of work, which are not found in jobs of any Commercial firm. The job, in fact, carries a good emolument even for a beginner. There is enough scope for upgrading one's position by honest service and devotion. Hence, I have decided to qualify myself either as an Upper Division Assistant or as an Inspector; whichever might fall to my lot. I also feel that I will have plenty of opportunities to be of help to the administration. Inspection and Secretarial work call for a discipline with which I will have the privilege to associate myself. These jobs also carry with

them the future provisions in the shape of retiring pensions and family pensions.

Please accept my regards. Awaiting your blessings and words of encouragement.

(312 words)

Your loving son,
X. Y. Z.

5. Write a letter to a friend of yours (in about 300 words) describing to him some notable event in your life
(Misc '72, '75)

Raniganj,

The 19th.....

My dear Rabi,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 10th instant. I am very glad to know from your letter that you are O.K. You have complained of the dullness of your life in the village. Let me try to relieve you of the monotony of village life by describing one of the notable events of my life.

On the last Saturday of the previous month I went to see the paper mill of our town. I spent two hours at the paper mill and watched the working of paper-making machine with interest. I went to the paper mill at 4 p.m. So it was evening when I left the paper mill and started homewards. As I approached the Post Office, I saw clouds of smoke rising from a nearby book-stall. Many boys and men were running towards the shop at great speed. Hearing the cry "Fire! Fire!" I also ran towards the book-stall. When I reached the vicinity of the book-stall I found a large crowd assembled near it. The salesmen left the shop when the fire had spread inside it. But the owner of the shop was making a desperate bid to save his property. Many men requested him to leave the burning shop. But he was unwilling to leave his shop. After a few minutes his garments caught fire. As no one made any attempt to save the unfortunate shopkeeper I quickly entered the shop.

and put the carpet which was spread on the floor on his body. Then I dragged him out of the shop. Some young boys carried the shopkeeper to the hospital. My hands were seriously burnt. But I felt no pain because I could save the poor shopkeeper's life. I shall never forget this memorable event in my life. I stop here ; more in my next. Convey my respects to your parents and accept my warm love.

(312 words)

Yours sincerely,

X. Y. Z.

6. Write a letter to your younger brother (in about 300 words) on the value of discipline in academic life
(Misc '72)

Burnpur,

My dear Dilip,

The 21st.....

I have not heard from you for a long time. I hope you are quite O.K. An account of the violent incidents of your College has appeared in today's Statesman. This has greatly disturbed my mind. I do not know whether you keep yourself aloof from violent activities in your College. Let me tell you a word or two about the value of discipline in academic life.

You should always remember that student life is the seedtime of life. A student who leads an undisciplined life will surely come to grief in the long run. Intellectual activities require a peaceful atmosphere in the academic institution. Schools and Colleges impart proper education to students if they behave in a disciplined manner. In the famous Universities of Oxford and Cambridge students do not indulge in violent activities. It is a matter of regret that in our country most of the academic institutions have now-a-days turned into centres of violent activities. Strikes, demonstrations, disruption of classes and examinations have shaken the foundations of the Universities of India. Normal academic life of our Schools and Colleges is now completely paralysed. In order to restore the academic atmosphere

students have to adopt a disciplined way of life. Strict disciplinary measures may be taken by heads of academic institutions, but they will prove useless if students themselves do not appreciate the value of discipline. Unless the discipline is practised from the very student life, they cannot build themselves as the well-disciplined man in their later life whom the country needs most for her security and prosperity.

I hope you will accept my views on the value of discipline in academic life and try to induce your friends and classmates to observe discipline. I am anxious to know further developments in the matter.

With love and blessings,
(301 words)

Yours affectionately,
X. Y. Z.

7. Write a letter to a friend describing a picture or play which you have recently seen and liked

(Misc '74)

Calcutta,
The 24th

My dear Rabi,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 14th instant. I am very sorry to learn from your letter that the dull monotony of village life has depressed you very much. In this letter I am giving you an account of a film show in order to break the monotony of your uneventful life at Patuli.

Yesterday Samir and I went to enjoy film show at the Metro Cinema. You know that I am very fond of Western films. Now the Metro Cinema is showing "A Tale of Two Cities". Samir and I thoroughly enjoyed this film show. 'A Tale of Two Cities' is one of the greatest novels of Charles Dickens. The film version of this historical novel gives a vivid picture of France during the French Revolution. It describes the sufferings of a physician and the members of

his family against the background of the Revolution. The physician Dr. Manette, his daughter Lucie, her husband Charles Darnay and her lover Sydney Carton are the main characters of the story. Dr. Manette's sufferings and the hopeless love of Carton for Lucie have made this story touching. But we enjoyed the film show for its vivid presentation of the horrors of the French Revolution. We were shown how the guillotine had been used to kill men during the 'reign of terror'. Many scenes in this film are unforgettable. For example, the storming of the Bastille left a deep impression on my mind. Music and photography of the film are excellent. Of all the film shows which I have recently enjoyed 'A Tale of Two Cities' moved me most. The acting and the sound effect are superb.

As your annual examination is over, you have now plenty of time to enjoy yourself. I request you to come here next Sunday and enjoy this picture yourself.

With my good wishes.

(306 words)

Your loving friend,
X. Y. Z.

8. Write a letter to your sister about the desirability or otherwise of co-education (Misc '75)

Calcutta,
The 15th.....

My dear Sister,

I am very glad to learn that you fared very well in the last Higher Secondary Examination and you have got yourself admitted in the local college of repute where co-education is in vogue.

Co-education means co-existence and co-operation of boys and girls for the cause of education under the same roof and in the same class. Now that men and women are treated on equal footing and that there is scarcity of exclusive women's colleges to cope with the increasing demand for female education, co-education in men's

colleges is becoming popular. Some hold the view that boys and girls may be permitted to receive education together upto the primary stage and then in the post-graduate classes when they are fully mature but in the secondary stage as well as in the college courses they should be educated separately. They fear that if girls are allowed to mix freely with boys in schools and colleges, the Western mode of life and vices may enter into our society. This is true to some extent because men and women at the threshold of their youth are naturally impulsive, sentimental and romantic and supremely callous to consequences and teachers are not always at their side to set the guidelines of conduct. The inevitable consequence of discovering that God has made them complementary to each other may be very serious indeed.

On its bright side, it helps in growing a happy and healthy spirit. A grown-up boy in the company of a grown-up girl becomes intellectually more alert, more civil and more polite. One may also emulate the good points of the other and create a healthy rivalry in studies.

Thus co-education has two sides and if you be careful to avoid free-mixing with the boys and alert against any apprehended slip, you will, I feel, be able to reap the benefits of this system with full credit and honour.

With love and blessings,

(318 words)

Yours affectionately,
X. Y. Z.

9. Write a letter to a friend suggesting useful and enjoyable ways of spending a long vacation at home
(Misc '76)

1, A. B. C. Rd.
Calcutta,

The 15th.....

My dear Rabi,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 10th instant. You have expressed in your letter your relief at the conclusion

of the examination and at the same time you feel worried as to how you will spend the time at home now. As one of your very close friends, I would offer my humble suggestion. I am sure, if you act accordingly, your time will pass as in a dream.

If you just care to read stories and poems, and be a stay-at-home, it will not be long before you will start feeling bored. And you know "an idle brain is the devil's workshop". So you should consider my suggestions carefully.

It would be fine to live in a cultural atmosphere. If it is not there already, what is the harm in making it yourself? Collect some of your like-minded friends and acquaintances and then recite poems and stage a drama in a local function. That will surely create a stir and bring a variety in the otherwise dry and drab movement of life.

You may also try to do some social welfare work in your locality. Collect some enthusiastic young boys and try to make the people in slums conscious of the need for proper sanitation and better living standards including family planning. You should also arrange for first aid and some medical relief for the sick, who are poor and helpless. You will thus gain experience of the wider world.

Or, suppose you try to eradicate illiteracy in your own humble way in your locality? In that case, you may be sure to get help from the Committee whose headquarters is in the Calcutta University campus. That also will give you a rich fund of pleasure, for you will then be bringing light in the abodes of darkness.

Tell me what you propose to do. In any case, remember that "work is worship". That is the secret success in life.

(324 words)

Yours sincerely,

X. Y. Z.

CHAPTER IV

STORIES & BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

1. Some women are discussing another woman, lately dead ; as you pass by you overhear one remark :

"You couldn't say she'd had a hard life exactly, because she didn't make a hardship of it."

Write an imaginary biographical sketch, or short story, illustrating the type of character which this description might fit. (WBCS '57)

"Have you heard, Monica, the good old Bina-di' is dead ?"

"Yes, I've heard. We shall all miss her so."

"But death has been a blessing to her. Such a hard life she had."

"You couldn't say she had a hard life exactly, for she didn't make a hardship of it."

I overheard the remark as I was passing by and felt how very true it was. A knot of ladies of the locality, young and old, had gathered in our parlour at a small party on the occasion of my youngest brother's birthday. Some of them were talking about the recent death of Mrs. Sen, the school-master's wife. Bina, as the lady's name was, had a wide circle of friends and admirers in the neighbourhood. My sister Reba and her friend Monica were discussing the circumstances of Mrs. Sen's death.

"But don't you agree," said Reba, "that death has at long last put an end to all her sufferings, both physical and mental ?"

"Perhaps so, in a sense, if we might really say that she looked upon the hardships she had to undergo as sufferings", replied Monica. "You know she had been a brilliant

student at College and her father was rich. She might easily make a much better choice in marrying, but she married the man she loved."

Ranjan Sen, the school master, had been a class-mate of Bina at the University. They loved each other and both of them graduated with credit. When a proposal for their marriage came, it was peremptorily turned down by Bina's wealthy father. But they were secretly married with the mother's blessings. The father grew furious and would not see the daughter's face for years.

Ranjan Sen belonged to a lower middle-class family and had his widowed mother, a younger brother and a grown-up sister as dependents on him. Soon after graduation, they felt the need of jobs but as they had no 'backing' behind, Ranjan Sen had to be content with a teachership in a private school and Bina with a part-time work in a Girl's Primary School.

The poor schoolmaster was blessed with as many as four children and was saddled with a heavy debt consequent on his sister's marriage and educational expenses of the brother. Physical strain, mental worry and privation gradually undermined Mrs. Sen's health and soon she became an invalid and an additional burden on her over-worked husband. But she bore all this heroically and struggled on till her last with that fortitude which only Bengali womanhood is capable of.

"She never regretted her choice," I heard Monica adding. "There was something tragic in her smiles which never left her. Did you ever hear a word of complaint from Bina-Di, Reba?"

"That was unique indeed. Any other woman would have completely changed in the circumstances. Even when life was ebbing out there was that sweet smile on her pale lips."

I dropped in and interposed, "Do you know, Monica, what Bina-Di' told me one day when I ventured to offer a little sympathy and cheer? She said with her never-failing

smile. that she took things easy and did not complain, for a woman must accept weal and woe with equal unconcern."

(529 words)

2. Write a character sketch of "a dunce" or a short story with "a dunce" for its hero. (WBCS '59)

A story of a Dunce

There was a stir among the teachers and the pupils of the Girls' School in the little township, when, for the first time, the new Head Mistress decided to celebrate the Foundation Day of the School. For weeks and weeks together the young and energetic Head, Miss Gupta, held meetings of the teaching staff and the representatives of senior students, drew up many programmes, revised and curtailed them, arranged rehearsals and the entire School was on the tip-toe with expectations for the great Day.

The School owed its origin to the munificence of a local businessman who had amassed a big fortune late in life from a very humble beginning. After his death his business and all his assets devolved on his only son, Anil Das. He was on the wrong side of forty when his father died, and soon ruined the business and ran through most of the big fortune he had inherited. As it often happens in the cases of only sons of rich men, he had no education but he was propped up to the top class of the local High School through un-failing magnanimity of his grateful teachers. He was a Jack of all trades and a terrible talker with an innate sense of superiority over others. He had a conviction that as a scholar, an orator, and a man of manifold virtues, he had no equal throughout the country.

Head Mistress Miss Gupta had to apprise Anil Das of her scheme of celebrating the Foundation Day of her School, for she knew that the Foundation Day without the Founder's progeny would be meaningless. She planned that in a function of a Girls' School only girls and ladies were to be

admitted and an educated elderly lady of the locality would be invited to preside over the function. But ever since he had heard about the scheme he had been rehearsing an address for this fair assembly and thus Anil compelled her to invite him as the Chief Guest.

The Day of days came. The School was gaily decorated with flags and festoons. A sort of a stage was improvised on which musical programmes, recitations and dramatic sketches were to be performed. As Anil Das entered the School Hall, dressed in his father's ornamental robes, two tiny girls garlanded him and the Head Mistress escorted him to his seat on the dais. A bevy of girls was about to commence the opening song, when suddenly the Chief Guest stood up and started his much prepared address, roaring at the top of his shrill voice, 'Gentlemen!' A ripple of suppressed laughter went throughout the gathering of ladies and little girls. Miss Gupta and the President vainly tried to intervene. Anil seemed inspired and went on shouting and gesticulating. He urged the audience to realise the importance of physical culture, especially boxing. Then he passed on to feasting and went on undaunted from one strange topic to another for full two hours, the time allotted for the entire programme of the function. Once or twice the President implored him to conclude, but he was in no mood to comply. When at long last he stopped through sheer exhaustion, a thunderous applause indicated the relief of the exasperated audience. Utterly unconcerned, he triumphantly strode out of the hall without a nod or a smile. (552 words)

3. Give a pen picture of your experiences of a mile's imaginary walk along any well-known street of Calcutta in the evening. (WBCS '59)

The sun was going down behind the Victoria Memorial. The purple glow of sunset lingered on the faultless marble domes of the world-famed structure, standing at a distance recalling to the mind unforgettable memories of the glory of sunset on the deathless Taj.

Right from the base of the massive statue of the Father of the Nation, I strolled northward along Chowringhee, to turn west towards Esplanade. I was thus passing through one of the most fashionable and perhaps the best kept areas of Calcutta. The light of day was dying out, its place was being taken by the myriad neon lights of the wide streets.

The din of traffic at that hour was almost deafening. Tram-cars, buses, private cars, lorries and slow-moving sundry vehicles were carrying full loads of passengers and goods. People from offices and lovers of sports from the Maidan formed the majority of passengers in tram-cars and buses. Leaving behind the massive Museum and the great adjoining buildings I took a turn towards the left. Crowds of men, women and children were seen queuing up in front of the fashionable cinema halls. The big shopping centres and restaurants were full of life. So also was the Tramway exchange opposite. As evening darkened, the myriads of lights converted the whole area into fairyland. Knots of people in pairs and groups were seen having their daily constitutional walk on the green stretches of the Maidan. I returned home on a double-decker enjoying the din and bustle of the great city from the upper deck. (257 words)

4. Describe "an Encounter with a Yeti" (WBCS '60)

In recent times, considerable speculation has centred round the Yeti or the Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas. Many mountaineers are of the view that the Yeti is a myth, because no animal of the kind has ever been actually seen. According to stray and unconfirmed reports emanating from individual sources, the Yeti is a huge monster, hairy and uncouth, more like a human being than an ape. It is said to resemble a guerilla in some respect, but is strikingly human in form. Some suspect the Yeti to look like a bear. It is believed to be herbivorous and extremely shy of human beings.

Certain mountaineers, besides some Sherpas and other

habitants of the Himalayan wilds, have supplied somewhat vague accounts about the existence of the Yeti in certain far-off and desolate areas beyond the borders of Nepal at high altitudes. Some people are said to have seen unusually big footprints in the snows, which, they say, are those of roving Yetis. The Yeti has thus been the object of intense curiosity of western and eastern mountaineers. Recently an expedition was organized for probing the mystery about the Yeti.

The lure of the great and mysterious Himalayas has always been irresistible to me and I was eagerly looking forward to an opportunity to trek as far up the great Himalayas as might be possible. Luckily, an opportunity presented itself and this unexpectedly gave me a chance to encounter a Yeti. After my graduation, I went to my uncle, who was then a Resident Engineer in Kathmandu, Nepal. During my stay there I made acquaintance with a Nepalese Assistant, some hill-men and Sherpas. One day, a Sherpa told us that the foot-prints about 10 inches long were seen on a river bed at an altitude a few miles east of Kathmandu. I at once decided to make an attempt to find out what a Yeti really was. The project had warm encouragement of my Nepalese friend and Sherpas. We started on our quest soon after with sufficient provision for a week, two small portable tents and some medicines, arms and other equipments.

The journey was uneventful and exhilarating. The Sherpa acted as our guide. After a couple of days' trek we pitched our tents in a village. We acclimatised ourselves. Two days later, a man rushed into our tent in breathless haste and announced that a Yeti was seen at some distance from the village. Escorted by the villager we practically went running over a couple of miles and far off we noticed a huge man-like figure apparently digging a hole with both its hands. As we ran forward the brute stood up and gave a terrific growl which reverberated in the still atmosphere. Suddenly it made a dash at us with

its massive arms held aloft. I fired and missed. The Nepalese Assistant then fired and a bullet seemed to have hit the Yeti on the right leg. It stopped and yelled again and then turned back. At an unbelievable speed it limped on and quickly disappeared. In the hurry and excitement of the moment I utterly forgot to take a snap with my camera in the kit-bag. It was a keen disappointment, for we thus lost a chance to prove to the world that the Yeti was not a mere figment of fancy. We then gave up the chase and went back to my uncle's shelter in Kathmandu. We felt proud that we had been the hero of an unbelievable happening. (484 words)

5. Tell (in about 400 words) the story of your own life—past, present and future :

*Points :—*Your boyhood—home atmosphere and its influence—school days—reminiscences, if any—your conception of a successful life—how equipped to face the struggle for existence—any ideal, aim or career chosen for the future—reason for the choice—steps contemplated to attain goal.

(CL '61)

A glimpse of my life

It is always a pleasure to me to recall the days of my childhood. I was brought up in a village home under the care of my mother, as my father was mostly away on business. I was a lonely child and spent a great part of the day wandering about the spacious gardens attached to the house. The evenings were very precious because mother would then draw me to her side and tell tales of fairies and wandering princes, and along with them I also roamed in the dreamland. One Swamiji of the Ramkrishna Mission centre in the adjoining village often visited our house. He would tell me stories of the people of the villages, of their goodness and simplicity as well as of their poverty and want. Once there was a vicious outbreak of epidemic in our village. The

social workers organised by that revered Swamiji went from door to door with help and consolation, and our village was spared from the worst horrors of the epidemic through their efforts. I got my first lesson in social service from them.

I was sent to school in a town not far from our village. The school was like any other school in such towns, with crowded, ill-equipped class rooms and a band of supine teachers. But I cannot forget the loving care of our English teacher who was a friend, philosopher and a guide to the students. He taught them the principles of service and humanism both by example and precept. I remember how I used to feel flattered whenever he spoke approvingly of any thing I had been able to perform. I resolved to model myself on the pattern he set up before his students.

Now I have completed formal education and am on the threshold of life. My limited experience has taught me that to be of any significance life should be inspired by a spirit of service. Our villagers are very simple and helpless. Yet they form the backbone of the country. I do not think that any work can be more fruitful than attending to the needs of these villagers and helping them to achieve a higher standard of living. So I am looking for an employment that would make me spend the rest of my life among unsophisticated villagers. I would like to give a concrete shape to the lessons that I learnt from the Swamiji and my English teacher. (407 words)

6. Give (in not more than 250 words) a biographical sketch of Swami Vivekananda. (CL '63)

Swami Vivekananda was born in the well-known Datta family of Simulia in Calcutta on 12th January 1863. His real name was Narendranath. As a boy he was fearless and intrepid. As he grew older he read Eastern and Western Philosophy with great avidity. In 1884 he passed the B. A. Examination and about this time his father died and he had

to take up the burden of the whole family. For spiritual solace he began to attend prayers in Brahma temples, as he lost faith in Hinduisim and became an atheist. From this spiritual eclipse he was rescued by Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansa. Under Ramkrishna's guidance he recovered his faith in God and after prolonged meditation he had the realization of the Ultimate Reality. He travelled throughout India as a Sannyasi. In 1893 he attended the Congress of World Religions at Chicago and explained the basic principles of Hinduism so lucidly and convincingly that he won instant recognition for himself and for his religion. There were many converts to Hinduism in America. That story was repeated in 1896 in England where also many people were attracted to his faith, among whom was Miss Margaret Noble, later known as *Sister Nivedita*. Coming back to India he started Ramkrishna Mission at Belur. The Sannyasis of this order were expected to observe life-long celibacy and dedicate themselves to the service of humanity. It was here, at Belur, that Vivekananda, the patriot and social reformer, passed away on the 4th July 1902, at the age of forty years. (250 words)

7. Develop the following outline into a connected story (of about 400 words) by introducing details :—
 English sailor—prisoner of war—war ends—comes home—London—bird-seller—sailor buys cage of birds—sets birds free—Why? (CL '66)

A story of deep love for liberty

One morning James and John, the two British sailors, were walking arm-in-arm down the street towards the market-place of London. They were friends from their boyhood and were almost of the same age. Both were born and brought up near the outskirts of Greater London. They became sailors at the age of sixteen. Now they have reached thirty. James was very tall, very broad and had a

graceful but serene look, as if he had suffered a lot and gained much experience in his life. John was small and delicate in health but very jolly. John all through remained in the merchant Navy, but James joined the Royal Navy and in a naval operation in the Mediterranean he was taken as a prisoner of war. He suffered there physical and mental tortures in the hands of the enemy and it was only after the war ended that he was set free and repatriated to London. This day John went to receive his friend at the London Port and the two were proceeding to their native place. James desired to buy some valuable presents for his near and dear ones whom he would meet after long years of separation. They were therefore strolling towards the market-place. There they first came across a bird-seller. John having no interest in these birds tried to move with his friend in a hurry to other corner of the market. But James halted there in deep thinking and asked the price of all the birds in that cage. The bird-seller was very happy to find a customer of his type and quoted a rather high price. But James without haggling about the price, counted the coins he had with him and finding that his purse will just meet the price of these birds he was glad. He paid the price, took the cage of birds but instead of carrying it with him, he opened the door of the cage and set free all the birds to the great bewilderment of John and the bird-seller. The birds flew away in the blue sky merrily and James heaved a sigh of relief. John questioned, "Why have you wasted all your money in this way? You have no money now to buy anything for your dear ones." James replied, "But I am happy that I have been able to set free these poor birds. I know the sufferings of imprisonment in my own life and the value of liberty is the highest to me."

Moral : The value of liberty is truly appreciated by one who suffered bondage. (426 words).

CHAPTER V

DEBATE, DIALOGUE, DRAMATIC SCENE, REPORT ETC.

1. Write a short dialogue between a Pacifist and a War-monger. (WBCS '50)

War-monger : O, I see, yours is a principle of pacifism, that is non-violence in all circumstances. But I hate such inert passivity. This is purely an outcome of weakness and lack of power or will to resist violence.

Pacifist : I'm afraid, I don't agree with you. Certainly this is not inert passivity, but some inherent active force in human mind that abhors the futility of meaningless massacre.....

War-monger : Ah, I wonder ! You call war futile, meaningless massacre ?

Pacifist : Yes, it is. It only brings about death and destructions. Nothing is gained but much is lost.

War-monger : Why ? A victorious country surely gains in territory, in wealth and in trade and commerce.

Pacifist : Of course, at a very high cost, at the cost of a generation of youths, who are smashed in the battle-fields, and whose near and dear relations bewail and suffer absolute poverty and destitution. The irrational forces that are let loose by this bloody business, and the prolonged suspension of normal course of life, education and culture cripple a nation much more, even if it be victorious.

War-monger : Down with your sentimental fascination for culture and civilization. If a country's freedom be at stake, will it not resist an invading army ?

Pacifist : War is bad and futile for all time to come and whatever noble cause is attributed to it, will not turn it good.

War-monger : Why do you call it bad and futile ? There may be some deaths and destructions ; but are these not the inevitable destiny of mankind ? These should come whether through war or through famine, pestilence and diseases. But think of the gains of those who survive the cataclysm. A protracted peace will make a nation stagnate and rot and war alone can rejuvenate it to a new life. War is the best exposition of the law of survival of the fittest.

Pacifist : It's nonsense to talk of survival of the fittest, when an atom bomb can inflict wide-spread devastating ruins on miles of areas. And it is towards that direction that the modern world is proceeding. War, today, declared by one nation against another would inevitably mean a global conflagration and would lead towards the complete elimination of the whole human race from the face of the earth. The only hope is that the world has now realised the value of peace and an international organisation has been set up to guard against the possibility of outbreak of war anywhere in this world.

(410 words)

2. Write an imaginary conversation between a pacifist urging a ban on nuclear weapons and a politician who favours the making of such weapons as a deterrent that will prevent a world war.

(WBCS '61)

Pacifist : Good morning, Mr. Politician. Did you see in the papers that the Geneva Conference of big Powers about the ban on nuclear tests is on the verge of a breakdown ? Russians apparently want to extend the scope of the conference and make nuclear talks part of the wider plan of total disarmament. One cannot find fault with their object but since the total disarmament is a far cry in the political situation of the world to-day, I think this alone will lead the Conference to a failure.

Politician : Yes, I have seen the report but I don't find any reason to be alarmed at it. The nuclear weapons will be brought nearer perfection by the Powers in possession of them. The knowledge that the opposite party is in a position to retaliate with equal or more devastating effect will prevent any great Power from precipitating the world in a nuclear war.

Pacifist : I don't understand your complacency about the situation. Do you not see that the tests are a positive menace to civilization built up with the toil of centuries? The nuclear fall-out in areas adjacent to the test site will imperil the health not only of the present generation but of future generations as well. Not to speak of tests, if I had authority, I would have banned the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

Politician : If you had your way, you would only have prolonged the agony of race suicide. Nations under the spell of opposing ideologies will continue to outdo each other. Some unguarded comment or hasty action may very well spark off a third world war in the event of which the use of conventional weapons perfected under modern conditions will be sufficient to bring about the annihilation and total destruction of the earth. Only the extinction of life will be much slower and therefore a more painful process. You have not surely forgotten that the dropping of two atomic bombs in Japan was enough to bring the Second World War to a close. If the bombs were not used and the war allowed to be prolonged, who knows how many more million lives would have been lost?

Pacifist : I think that is a very wrong way of looking at the problem. Devastations caused by those two bombs were no less than what would have been if the war continued sometime more. Thousands of Japanese lost their lives and thousands of others were maimed and incapacitated for life under the impact of the bombs.

No, I don't think the problem will be solved by piling up nuclear weapons. An altogether new approach is necessary to make men realize the futility of competition and the importance of co-operative and fraternal effort to solve the problems of life. (462 words)

3. Write a short dialogue, in simple conversational style, between two persons, one supporting and the other opposing the abolition of the death sentence
(WBCS '57, IAS '65)

(Two friends, Naren, a lawyer and Jogen, a teacher, are talking as they are sipping tea)

Jogen : Haven't you read in today's papers that an M.P. has tabled a motion in Parliament for abolition of capital punishment in our country ?

Naren : Yes, I have read it. But I am sure the motion will not be passed by the House.

Jogen : Why do you think so ? Don't you feel that discontinuance of that inhuman form of punishment has long been overdue in this country ? When countries like Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and West Germany could abolish capital punishment or allow it to fall into disuse, can't we follow the same ? Even Britain abolished death penalty permanently with effect from Dec. 1969 !

Naren : Your list is not exhaustive. The system of capital punishment is still in vogue in the civilized countries like China, Japan, U.S.A. and the Soviet Union. All the Commonwealth countries have also retained death penalty.

Jogen : To my mind, Indian tradition and culture militate against this law of the jungle. The land of the Buddha and Gandhi ought to show the way to other lands.

Naren : Why do you call capital punishment a law of the jungle ? You know, one of the primary functions of law is to check crime, and penalty of death is the greatest deterrent to committing crime.

Jogen : But has the State a moral right to take the life of a citizen, whatever may be the magnitude of his crime ?
When you hang a man who has committed a murder,
you follow the law of the jungle—a tooth for a tooth,
an eye for an eye.

Naren : (smiling) You teachers are philosophers and idealists. Law does not discriminate, it is implacable. Besides, it is now imposed only for very serious crimes like murder and treason and that also in extreme cases. The existing law also provides safeguards for appeal and mercy petitions.

Jogen : As a lawyer it is but natural that you should uphold the might of law, You have conveniently by-passed my original contention that capital punishment is itself a crime against humanity in the sense that it is an infringement of man's right to live. By hanging a man for murder you do not bring back to life the man who has been killed, nor you do any reform of the criminal.

Naren : Well, Jogen, let's defer the discussion for a future occasion when, I'm sure, I shall be able to convince you to my views. (416 words)

4. Write a short dramatic scene in which a poor peasant who has come to a pitiless village money-lender for a loan implores the latter, in vain, to be reasonable in the matter of interest he wants to charge. The helpless peasant is almost forced to accept the money-lender's terms when another villager enters and rescues him, offering him a loan on easy terms from the village co-operative society—much to the annoyance of the money-lender.
(WBCS '58)

A dramatic scene

Scene : A village money-lender's house.

Characters : A money-lender, A peasant villager,
Second villager

(A peasant enters the money-lender's house)

Money-lender : Why have you come again ? I've already given my final word.

Peasant : Pray, have pity on me, Sir. We are all starving. None of my family will survive unless you kindly help me with a small loan. I promise to repay soon after harvesting of crops.

Money-lender : Don't tease me like this. I've told you that you may have Rs. 100 for four months if you agree to pay me Rs. 10 as interest on the first day of each month.

Peasant : This will mean, Sir, that I shall have to pay almost double the sum you want to give me. It will be quite impossible. You know poor I am.

Money-lender : Don't argue. Money is not pebble. I am not here to throw away money in charity. If you don't agree to my terms, you may clear out.

Peasant : We have not had a morsel of food for the last three days. The children are crying, my old mother is on the verge of death. I must feed them somehow till the harvest. If you don't relent, I have to agree to your terms, even if that kills me. (bursts into tears)

(Enters second villager)

Second villager : Well, Nabin-bhai, what has happened ? Why are you weeping ? Does the *mahajan* still insist on his extraordinary terms ?

Peasant : Yes, brother, he won't have pity. I have to agree, or we shall all die.

Second villager (to the money-lender) : Please, *Mahajan*, do relent please. Nabin-bhai is our co-villager. It is our duty to help him in his distress. You can easily save him and his family.

Money-lender : It is none of your business. I know my duty. Don't meddle in my affair, I say.

Second villager : Very well, I won't meddle, but I am not going to let you bleed this poor man to death. Come away, Nabin-bhai, I'll get you a loan on very easy terms from our Co-operative Society. The *mahajan* is not the man to be moved by tears.

(The money-lender frowns. *Exeunt* both villagers.)

(335 words)

5. Write an account of an imaginary symposium on 'The East is East and the West is West, and yet the Twain can meet'. (WBCS '59, IAS '59)

There was a symposium in the Assembly Hall of the University Institute. Some of the leading intellectuals of the city were invited to take part in it. The subject for discussion was "The East is East and the West is West, and yet the Twain can meet."

A Professor of International Politics initiated the debate and gave a forceful resume of the current developments in international affairs supporting the contention that inspite of differences of race, creed, colour and tradition, the East and the West can and are bound to meet for the common good of humanity. The barriers among peoples and lands, he contended, were vanishing fast with the advance of science, so that the age-old vision of universal brotherhood is no longer a philosopher's phantasy. Time and distance are being steadily annihilated and ideological divergences are being progressively smoothed down. Resurgence of Afro-Asian countries and ever-increasing rivalry among the Power blocs in the West are paving the way to mutual understanding and adjustment, the need for which has never been so pressing as it is today. Hence, the Professor concluded that Kipling's much quoted lines were out of place in the present set-up of the world.

An eminent Jurist opposed the Professor. He based his arguments on the old-world view that the Western and the

Eastern peoples are fundamentally different. God has made them so, he averred. In culture, tradition, habit, custom and outlook they are so wide apart that the gulf between them can never be bridged. He concluded by saying that despite the charge of narrow imperialism levelled against Kipling, he spoke the truth when he said,

“East is East and West is West,
And ne’er the twain shall meet.”

(283 words)

6. Write a short account of a debate on the following motion at a meeting of your College Union—
 - (i) “That in the opinion of the House the modern trend of science is a danger to humanity” (*WBCS '60*)
 - (ii) “That sportsmen are better ambassadors of amity between nations than cultural delegations” (*WBCS '62*)
 - (iii) “What the country needs at the present moment is not *more* graduates but *better* graduates” (*WBCS '64*)
 - (iv) “That the principle, ‘My country, right or wrong’, holds good in all cases.” (*WBCS '63*)

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- (i) Debate on “The modern trend of science is a danger to humanity” (*WBCS '60*)

An interesting debate took place at the last meeting of our College Debating Society in the College Assembly Hall. The meeting was presided over by an eminent Professor and was very largely attended. A lively discussion ensued on the motion, “That in the opinion of the House the modern trend of science is a danger to humanity.” It was moved by the Secretary of the Society, who was seconded and supported by two other senior students of the College. The opposition was led by a brilliant student of science, who was ably supported by two of his classmates.

Initiating the debate, the mover of the motion gave a comprehensive resume of the recent achievements of science

and the use to which they are being put. The discovery of atomic energy, the mover said, has revolutionized science and is fraught with tremendous possibilities both for good as well as for evil. Weighed in the balance, the evils seem to far out-weigh the blessings. Blind nationalism and ideological conflict have divided the world into two warring blocs and tension between the two is mounting day by day. Science is tending to be the slave of political and diplomatic rivalries and scientists are being forced to forge weapons for mass destruction. Atom and Hydrogen bombs, rockets, and inter-continental ballistic missiles are being piled up. A spark may at any time bring about annihilation of humanity. Other speakers supporting the mover spoke in the same strain.

The leader of the opposition contended that science cannot be held responsible for the use to which its discoveries are being subjected. Science, like religion, seeks to explain and interpret nature for peace and happiness of mankind. In doing so science arrives at truths which lead to new discoveries. The first explosion of atom was carried in this way and if the energy thus released is put to use for making weapons of destruction, science should not be held responsible for it.

This view was further elaborated by two other speakers and the President summed up the debate in a neat and learned speech. The motion was eventually passed by an overwhelming majority. (355 words)

(ii) Debate on "Sportsmen are better ambassadors of amity between nations than cultural delegations" (WBCS '62)

Recently the members of the Regional Sports Committee organised a very interesting debate at the local Town Hall. The subject was "that in the opinion of the House, sportsmen are better ambassadors of amity between nations than cultural delegations." Among the supporters of the

motion there were leading members of the Sports Committee and some Professors of the local College were persuaded to appear in opposition. The leader of the opposition, a senior Professor, took the view that nation's culture represents the sum total of its experience. Cultural delegations representing the different facets of the intellectual and emotional life of the people help to interpret the nation to others as nothing else can do. Sports touch only the surface of national life. Some forms of sports are not even indigenous. They are borrowed from other countries and not being native to the soil, they cannot represent a correct picture of the national urges. The opposition cited the case of cricket in India. They said that cricket has no link with the common people, the masses. So cricketers visiting other countries from India are not true representatives of the nation. The sponsors of the motion held that it was not true to say that men of culture were truer representatives of the people than sportsmen. They belong to an exclusive class and are far above the intellectual level of the common people. Even when they visit another country they associate with people of their own class and studiously avoid coming into touch with the masses. They have, indeed, little effect upon the minds of common people. Besides, delegations are frequently composed of people many of whom find places in the delegation not on the strength of their personal achievements but through backdoor influences. Far from giving an idea of the nation's culture they only give a distorted image of national life. But sportsmen who are sent to foreign countries are men of proved worth. There is no room for incompetence here. Besides, sportsmen do not form an exclusive class. They come from the masses and have no hesitation to freely mix with them. Thus it is easier for them to make an immediate appeal to the common people in other countries. The sponsors of the motion cited the case of English cricketers who toured this country after liberation of Goa, which somewhat assuaged the-

feeling of bitterness created in the country against England because of England's attitude towards the freeing of Goa. When the motion was put to vote, it was carried by a huge majority. The two hours spent at the Town Hall that evening were really an enjoyable treat. (438 words)

- (iii) Debate on "What the country needs at the present moment is not *more* graduates but *better* graduates" (WBCS '64)

Recently there was a very interesting debate in the local Town Hall organised by a cultural association of this place. The subject for debate was "What the country needs at the present moment is not *more* graduates but *better* graduates." The mover of the resolution was the manager of an industrial plant that specialises in the production of scientific instruments. A representative of the Education Department was prevailed upon to be the leader of the opposition. The mover of the resolution started by saying that education has obviously made rapid strides in this State in modern times. But, the quality of output from the schools and colleges at present compared very unfavourably with what it used to be a decade or two ago. Speaking from personal experience he said that new recruits to his factory, young graduates from Engineering Colleges, did not seem to be as reliable as the senior men in his establishment. He had to think seriously before entrusting these young men with work of any importance. In view of this, he concluded, the Education Department of the Government should put more emphasis upon quality than on quantitative expansion of education in the State. The leader of the opposition, on rising to reply, said that it was all very well to suggest that the quality should improve at the expense of quantity. But it would be imprudent to forget that the amount of literacy in this State, nay, in the whole of India, was abnormally low before the achievement of independence. The problem was to spread education by starting new schools and colleges even if these institutions were ill-equipped and could not provide education on

sound lines. The Government of the country has been trying to solve this problem by opening more and more schools and colleges and affording facilities for higher education to an increasing number of students. In trying to do this it might not have been able to pay sufficient attention to quality. Other speakers pointed out that if the country has to be built up on sound lines proper personnel have to be provided for its factories, railways, air force and public service. If ill-equipped young men are placed in charge of the nation-building departments, the country can never make any progress. The country has now reached a crucial stage when more attention should be paid to quality in preference to quantity. When put to vote the resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority. It was a very enjoyable function, the like of which had not been held here for quite a long time. (430 words)

- (iv) Debate on "That the principle, 'My country, right or wrong', holds good in all cases."
Reproduce your opening speech. (WBCS '63)

Mr. President, Sir, I consider it a privilege to be called upon to sponsor the motion before the House "that the principle, 'My country, right or wrong,' holds good in all cases." It is, in effect, an appeal to the feeling of patriotism and love for one's own country. The country where one is born and grows up has justly been equated with the mother and to be wanting in loyalty to it is an unfilial act of the deepest dye. I am aware, Sir, that in the world of to-day there is a strong rivalry between the spirit of nationalism and the spirit of internationalism and the latter ideal, that one should look beyond national frontiers to the common humanity, has been gaining increasing ground as a means of ensuring world peace. This is a good idea no doubt, but, Sir, the achievement of such a world government in which the interests of each country will be looked after with anxious care and solicitude by a powerful world orga-

nisation is a matter of distant future. So long as it does not take shape and we are not trained to look upon the whole world as our motherland, I think it will be safe for us to consider ourselves children of the geographical entity, the country where we are born. Moreover, a country cannot grow unless the spirit of nationalism deepens in the hearts of its people. As a child is expected to stand by his mother, even by her faults and drawbacks, in the same way a man should stand by his motherland, support her cause even if she happens to be in the wrong. I would appeal to the House to consider what should be the duty of a citizen when taking advantage of the country's lapses another country sends her armies, well-trained and well-equipped, to over-run her and enslave her into the bargain. Should he pose an international and desert his motherland to help the enemy only for his disapproval of the doings of the people and government of his country? Surely not, because if the country is enslaved, her every children, ruler or ruled, will face the same national calamity and lose freedom. That is why we find, in the world of to-day, every country, whatever its political ideologies may be, is trying to ensure its integrity and a place of honour for itself in the council of nations. Before concluding I would like to remind the House of the fate of Bibhisan in the Ramayana. He was, indeed, a man of honesty and virtue, but for the single fault of proving disloyal to his country even when she was patently in the wrong, he is now a by-word for a traitor, a fifth columnist, who sells his country's honour for personal gain. That is the fate, I take leave to remind the House, of all those who side with the enemy on the plea of the country being in the wrong. (495 words)

7. "Those were the days." Write a defence of your own times in reply to an elderly person who is fond of quoting these words. (WBCS '64)

The past and the present

One of my neighbours, an elderly person, is very fond of

decrying the present age and extolling the days that are no more. He is so blindly enamoured of the past that he refuses to admit that the present has any redeeming feature. According to him, the foodstuffs and other necessities of life now-a-days are not only dear but also adulterated and the corruption is rampant everywhere. There was simplicity and contentment in peoples' lives in the past and they learnt to show respect to the aged. They were free from hurry and jostle of the crowd which characterise the life of our times. But while admitting all these good things in the past, it cannot be denied that the present has opened up innumerable advantages and amenities not known in old times. The life in the past was over-shadowed by a great deal of ignorance and superstition. Illiteracy was widespread and as a result all manner of false ideas dominated life in those days. No man who is amenable to reason can deny that education is more widespread today than it was at any time in the past. Formerly it was the exclusive privilege of a small coterie of men who did not hesitate to exploit the ignorance and superstition of the many. Now this kind of exploitation is inconceivable. Peoples in the past were meek victims to various diseases and epidemics, most of which are now controllable through the discovery of medicines and preventives. We have now powerful means of transport and communication which help ideas to spread rapidly from one corner of the earth to another and thus remove the cobwebs of superstition that enmeshed the intellect in old times. This intellectual freedom has led to the growth of the scientific spirit, the desire to see things as they really are. The swifter means of transport and other scientific developments have rendered life more colourful than dreamt of before. It is, of course, true that food was more plentiful in the past and accommodation ampler than what the present can offer. This was because the world's population was much less in those days. But what the world has lost in the way of food and accommodation,

it has more than made up by wider knowledge and keen interest in world problems. Lastly, it cannot be gainsaid that increased opportunity for recreation in the shape of games, cinema, radio, television etc. have removed drabness and monotony from life and given interest and colour beyond the wildest dreams of our forefathers. (421 words)

8. Write one speech for and one against (in 100 words each) the motion that—

- (i) "Progress is a delusion" (WBCS '66)
- (ii) "Agriculture rather than Big Industry is what India need today" (WBCS '65)
- (iii) "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel" (WBCS '67, IAS '67)
- (iv) "Love and gun-powder are the worst inventions of Man" (WBCS '68)
- (v) "Government employees cannot have the right to go on strike for the redress of their grievances" (WBCS '69)
- (vi) "The conquest of poverty would be greater and more desirable achievement than the conquest of the moon" (WBCS '70)
- (vii) "Intellectuals would make a better job of ruling the world than politicians" (WBCS '72)
- (viii) "Patriotism is not enough" (WBCS '73, IAS '58)
- (ix) "Women are more intelligent than men" (WBCS '74)
- (x) "Today Man is not in need of more power : he needs more idealism" (WBCS '75)
- (i) "Progress is a delusion" (WBCS '66)

For—The world does not progress, it merely changes, and the idea of progress is a myth, a pure fiction. Man has simply changed with the world but neither he nor the world is in any way better for this change. In that case one must admit that the golden age lies in the past. The ancient civilizations of Greece, Rome or India are still the wonder

and envy of the modern men. Progress today has degenerated into the meaning of material well-being of moral or spiritual advancement. Progress is, therefore, a mirage ; and a mirage, however beautiful, is not true.

(100 words)

Against—In their over-enthusiasm for seeking the golden age of man in the past, critics are perhaps led by the thought that man has ceased to make any progress and is continuously going downhill. The emergence of mankind from the state of barbarism to the journey to the moon is undoubtedly a story of evolution and progress. In every sphere of human activities—art, literature, science, politics—modern man is certainly far ahead of his predecessors. Die-hards may still be tempted to argue that this is only a superficial progress affecting only a few. But this may be brushed aside as a piece of malicious cynicism. (107 words)

(ii) 'Agriculture rather than Big Industry is what India needs today.' (WBCS '65)

In the first two Five-Year Plans more emphasis was placed on industries than on agriculture. The consequence of this mistake is being realised now. There is wide-spread food shortage in the country and prices of food articles are soaring beyond the reach of even middle-class householders. This has resulted in general discontent among the masses and it is jeopardising the success of planning. If food has to be imported into the country from foreign lands, it means a drain on foreign exchange resources with consequent baneful effect upon industrial planning. So the need of the hour is to give a high priority to agriculture in national planning.

Enlightened opinion in every progressive country to-day puts the highest emphasis on heavy Industries. Success in this sphere gives man easy conquest over Nature and where that has been achieved man has ceased to suffer from hunger or want of any description. If the abundant resources of Nature can be harnessed to the use of man, the future of this country is assured. There may be temporary shortage of

food in a country that has set its heart upon heavy industries but the inconveniences resulting from it can be overcome by imports of foodgrains from abroad as in England. Again it is concentration on heavy industries alone that can effectively solve the problem of unemployment. (107+115 words)

- (iii) "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel."
(WBCS '67, IAS '67)*

For—When the scoundrels fail to exploit people in any other way, they put on the garb of patriotism and victimize gullible people. History abounds in the illustrations of men who indulged in all sorts of monstrous activities to fulfil their own ambition, to satisfy their own whims and called their activities patriotic. Hitler, for example, put thousands of men and women to endless sufferings and led the world to the brink of total destruction for his own thirst for power and glory but called it patriotism. When Julius Caesar was murdered, the Romans were given to understand that it was done on the ground of patriotism. (106 words)

Against—The previous speaker completely ignored the fact that history also tells us of such men as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose or Gandhiji. A close study of history shows that it is patriotic feelings that have inspired man to the greatest achievements of his life. Self-sacrifice and self-dedication—these are the two things we associate with patriotism. India has got her freedom because such men as Netaji Bose laid down their lives. According to Swami Vivekananda patriotism is the greatest religion of the world. It is patriotism that makes a nation great, because a nation is built on the sacrifice of thousands. (101 words)

- (iv) "Love and gunpowder are the worst inventions of man"
(WBCS '68)

For—Man has degraded himself by inventing two absurd things : a queer worship of woman by man called love and the gunpowder which explodes to destroy the accumulated

glory of creation. It was foolish on the part of man to have invented an idea which unbalances a man's reasoning and throws him at the feet of a woman to be her slave when he should be her master. Again gunpowder, the weapon of the coward, has put an end to the valour of the medieval swordsman. So, let us bury these two things—the worst inventions of man—for peace and glory. (101 words)

Against—The previous speaker is misconceived since for misuse of anything the inventor or the invention cannot be blamed. Nobody will question the greatness of man's inventions in various fields of science and arts. If that godly thing called love which inspired thousands of writers and poets, warriors and wooers had not been invented, this world would have been a dreary desert without an oasis. It will be so unfortunate to deny man the great glory of revolutionising the crude way of fighting and killing the deadly enemies by the use of gunpowder. So love and gunpowder are undoubtedly two great inventions of man.

(102 words)

(v). "Government employees cannot have the right to go on strike for the redress of their grievances" (WBCS '69)

For—It has recently been witnessed that the Government employees are going on strike for realising their demands like the factory workers. This has been an unwelcome, rather an unfortunate development in the country. Government servants are bound by a sense of loyalty to the administration. Hence any move to organize strike amongst the government employees must be looked upon as an act of indiscipline and a violation of the Government Service Rules. Holding responsible position in life, they must not forget that militancy or defiance on their part may be the immediate cause of administrative failure which would affect the lives of people. Hence this act cannot be justified.

(108 words)

Against—The previous speaker has made a queer conclusion that since the Government employees are bound by a sense of loyalty to the administration, they cannot go on strike. Would he deny the fact that after all the Government is the employer and they are the employees. So, if the employer does not do his duty to his employees, should the aggrieved ones carry on their jobs inefficiently or half-heartedly rather than have their grievances redressed by resorting to democratic methods of trade-unionism? Further, the time-old Service Rules were framed for the subjugation and exploitation of employees which should no longer hold good in independent India. (104 words)

- (vi) "The conquest of poverty would be greater and more desirable achievement than the conquest of the moon" (WBCS '70)

For—Even commending highly the technical brilliance of the NASA people or the Russians who conquered the moon by sending some astronauts to stroll on the moon or by dropping an unmanned moon-taxi there, we do not find any justification for this mammoth waste of money and manpower over some speculative gains in the world of science, in face of dire poverty and ignorance of the teeming millions on this earth. If America or Russia could choose to spend all that huge amount for the uplift of men on earth, it would have been undoubtedly a bigger achievement than the conquest of the moon itself. (104 words)

Against—There are some people who, in the name of man's well-being on this earth, would choose to be critical of the miraculous performance of the men of science. They do not look upon man's conquest of the moon as a great achievement simply because there are poor and hungry people on this earth. Eradication of poverty is a noble cause no doubt, but should it be reason enough to shut down all great scientific explorations? Man's conquest of the moon is a miraculous feat which need not be looked

down upon only because the earth has yet to solve the problem of poverty. (101 words)

(vii) "Intellectuals would make a better job of ruling the world than politicians"

(WBCS '72)

For—Since the intellectuals are free from any party-bias, they should be best suited for ruling the world. The limitless lapses of politicians in running the administration in various countries show that they very much lack in intellectual quality which is so essential for running the administration smoothly. An intellectual is also equipped with a disinterestedness which helps him to judge things in their real perspective free from narrow political creeds to make him a better administrator. (75 words)

Against—Only the short-sighted and the academically-minded people would give credence to the belief that intellectuals are better suited to ruling the world than the politicians. Unless the rulers have the political backing and intimacy with people, which politicians are supposed to have, there could be no stable administration. The politicians with their loyalty to the party ideals can give their best to the cause of the people, while an intellectual being too aloof is unsuitable for ruling the world. (79 words)

(viii) "Patriotism is not enough"

(WBCS '73, IAS '58)

Mr. President,

For—I admit that patriotism is a noble virtue, but in the world of today it is not everything. History abounds in the illustrations of men who indulged in all sorts of monstrous activities to fulfil their own ambitions or whims and called their activities patriotic. Patriotism often narrows our outlook and makes us unfair and ungenerous in our estimate of other nations. Science has made the world narrower. Now we should aspire to become world citizens and we must not

cherish any hatred or bitterness towards any one on grounds of national or patriotic feelings. (94 words)

Against—The previous speaker completely ignored the fact that history also tells us of such men as Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose or Gandhiji. We proudly remember the Sanskrit proverb which says that one's mother and motherland are greater even than heaven. A true patriot is always ready to lay down his life for the sake of his country's welfare. India won freedom because many patriots sacrificed their lives for the cause of the country. We should be proud of our patriots and remember the famous words of the British poet : "My country, right or wrong". (94 words)

(ix) "Women are more intelligent than men"
(WBCS '74)

Mr. President,

For—I hope you will subscribe to my view that women are more intelligent than men. Nature had made female creatures more clever and intelligent than male creatures because they have to play the most important role in procreation. In our society we find that men are physically stronger and more imaginative, but women are more intelligent. Women are realistic in their approach to problems of everyday life and always display their resourcefulness and common sense of approach to problems of life. Their realism, resourcefulness and common sense are clear signs of superior intelligence. (93 words)

Against—I am not a *misogynist* but I cannot admire a woman for her intelligence. I share Byron's view that love is woman's whole existence. There is no denying that women are guided by hearts and they seldom follow the instructions of their heads. Emotions play an important part in the life of a woman. The intellect of a woman is clouded by her emotions. In all societies men are superior to women in intelligence. The young girls often fall victims to the libertine and philanderers of the society, which shows that they lack in intelligence. (96 words)

- (x) "Today Man is not in need of more power :
he needs more idealism"

(WBCS '75)

For—Mr. President,

Now we are passing through hard times. The evils of power are clearly evident in both national and international spheres. Our democracy is the largest one in the world. But at present power-hungry politicians have made a farce of it. Lust for power is responsible for the division in public life. What we need today are a large number of idealists among our leaders. When we turn to the international scene, we find that the Super-powers are madly manufacturing nuclear weapons. We are likely to perish if members of the nuclear club are not inspired with some ideals of love and peace. (102 words)

Against—Mr. President,

I firmly believe in the efficacy of the old adage : "If you want peace, be prepared for war." Noble ideals of the past centuries have served no useful purpose in our age. Our great leaders Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru preached idealism from different platforms. But today we know what has been the fate of their ideals. Have we not been attacked by China in spite of 'Hindi-Chini-Bhai-Bhai' ideal ? Even our policy of non-alignment is gradually losing its meaning in the changed context of world situation. So the age of idealism is gone ; and we require more power to exist on earth. (104 words)

9. Write a dialogue between two friends discussing—
- (i) the importance of having a good knowledge of English (Misc '68, WBCS '73)
 - (ii) the prospect of a certain candidate in the election to their College Union to be held shortly (Misc '72)
 - (iii) whether people had a happier life to-day than they did a hundred years ago (Misc '76)

- (i) The importance of having a good knowledge of English (Misc '68, WBCS '73)

Naren : Really, I envy you for your command on English. I wish I could sit for the competitive examination with the same ease and confidence that you have in your abilities.

Pradip : This is an exaggeration. I have only some power of articulation in English language which gives me a sort of command over different subjects.

Naren : I feel that a good knowledge of English is essential as it brings the world's storehouse of knowledge at our disposal. It helps our studies in technology, science and research in humanities. I do not follow why some people are loud in the banishment of this rich language form our country.

Pradip : Because the people feel that after independence we should not cling to the language which was once a symbol of the British Rule and should instead accept Hindi as the National language of India.

Naren : But I don't think Hindi has such qualities as to replace English.

Pradip : Yes, it's true. Whenever we have to express ourselves on very complicated issues of life or on technical subjects we have to borrow from English since it is the richest and the most popular language on earth.

Naren : If English is considered so important, should we not learn it properly along with our own mother language and make it a medium of instruction in our school or college curricula ?

Pradip : Yes, that would have been better. I have no hesitation in saying that my knowledge of English had stood me in good stead in my competitive examination, in interviews and in my conversations with the foreigners, that is in building up my career. (262 words)

E. E. & C.—V

(ii) Prospect of a candidate in the election to the
College Union (Misc '72)

Anil—Do you know why the classes are closed at 2 p. m.
today ?

Ashit—Have you not seen the Notice Board ? College
will be closed at 2 p. m. today because nomination papers
will be scrutinised thereafter.

Anil—So, our College Union election will be held very
soon.

Ashit—It will be held a week later on the 24th.

Anil—How many candidates are contesting from
our class ?

Ashit—Our Constituency has three seats and there are
nine candidates.

Anil—Will Manab seek re-election this year ?

Ashit—Yes. He is one of our candidates. I think he
will come out victorious in the election.

Anil—Are you sure about it ?

Ashit—Why not ? He has done a lot of work for the
students of our class. He is intelligent and honest.

Anil—But you know his father is a discredited
politician.

Ashit—I believe our class friends are not interested in
Manab's family history.

Anil—What do you think of Manab's love-affair with
the Principal's daughter ?

Ashit—That is a concocted story. Manab's rivals are
spreading such false stories about him.

Anil—Is it then a part of their political propaganda ?

Ashit—Yes.

Anil—Is Manab canvassing votes for himself ?

Ashit—You know Manab is a shy boy. He does not
request his classmates to cast their votes in his favour.

Anil—Are his supporters busy in canvassing vote for
him ?

Ashit—Yes. Manab has many supporters in the class.

His chief supporter is Dhiren. Dhiren is a good speaker. He makes excellent election speeches.

Anil—Now I am convinced that Manab has fair chance of winning the College Union election.

Ashit—Well, let us go to Dilkhusa for tea. (255 words)

(iii) Whether people lead a happier life today
than they did a hundred years ago

(Misc. '76)

Anil—What do you think—are we far more happy today than our century-old predecessors ?

Sunil—Certainly. Right from the time we wake up till the time we go to bed, science is at our beck and call today. And that has made us happy. We have also become more civilized than our forefathers and greater happiness is the fruit of an improved civilization. Can we deny that ?

Anil—Yes, we have become civilized. We have gained much. But have you ever cared to think, at what a tremendous cost ? We are running after pelf and power ; we are hungry for material gain. Our ancestors had a different goal. They never aspired for such cheap pleasures. They fought for spiritual glory. Think of the teacher-taught relationship. Love was the bond that bound them together in the past ; today they seem to be at daggers drawn. They were true and honest ; they had hope and health, strength within and calm around.

Sunil—Ha, ha ! You call them happier ? Helpless and weak at the hands of Nature and ignorant of many a thing ! Anyway, answer me if you can. Did they have a Rabindranath, an Einstein, a Gandhiji or a Netaji in their form a hundred years back.

Anil—Friend, if you look back to the past with less hostility, you will remember that they did have a Kalidasa among them, an Aryabhatta or Archimedes, a Viswamitra or an Arjuna, a Maitreyee, Yajñabalka, a

Yudhisthira. They were happier because they lived in an age of peace and simplicity, an age that is gone and lost for ever. (260 words)

10. Write a dialogue (of about 250 words) between two persons discussing an exciting football match which they have just witnessed. (Misc '68)

Naren : So your Dynamo Minsk gave such a poor account of themselves ! I told you right at the start our football players were by no means inferior to world's top-ranking players. The Soviet players were lauded to the skies and now our I. F. A. XI have been able to restrain them to two bare goals only. It was an exciting game indeed !

Pradip : I simply do not understand what you are driving at. Don't you admit that the first goal the visitors scored before half-time was a perfect beauty ? And you saw with your own eyes how the players of I. F. A. XI bungled the game to prove their inferiority. Do you not see how they played in defence all through without ever rising to any height ?

Naren : You may be eloquent in the praises of foreigners, but that must not blind you to the brilliant performance of such players as Chuni Goswami and Habib. Think of defence-splitting forward pass from Goswami which, unfortunately, Ashoke Chatterjee could not shoot into the goal. Was it not splendid ? And what of the spectacular left foot volley by Habib which sailed over the bar of the other side ?

Pradip : I must say that the visiting team were a splendid team, but they were rather unlucky, while the I. F. A. XI were quite lucky to have several escapes.

Naren : No. I do not admit that the I. F. A. XI escaped further goals merely by luck. Our team displayed no less spectacular match today. This shows that our team with a little more training and practice can face any foreign team. (252 words)

11. Write a dialogue (of about 250 words) between two men discussing the problem of waterlogging in the streets of Calcutta during the rainy season
(Misc '68 '75)

Mr. Das—Well Mr. Banerjee ! How do you propose to stride through this sheet of water all over the city to reach your home this evening ?

Mr. Banerjee—There was heavy shower this afternoon for over an hour and most of the streets of Calcutta are now submerged under water looking like pools. Most of the tram-cars and buses have stopped plying. So there is no alternative to our going on foot all the way.

Mr. Das—So let us move on. But don't put off your shoes lest your feet may be hurt.

Mr. Banerjee—The conditions of these roads and drainage system here are so bad that the waterlogging just formed may continue for days. We must walk very cautiously as otherwise we may fall into dug-outs of these roads hidden under water and may lose our limbs.

Mr. Das—Is there none to look after this condition of the city and rectify the defects !

Mr. Banerjee—Yes, the Government, the Calcutta Corporation and the C. M. D. A., who are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of roads and drainage system of the city are aware of the present unbearable condition of waterlogging and the consequent inconveniences to pedestrians and city-dwellers, but they could not find out any permanent remedy for constraints of resources. What they are doing now is to pump out water where waterlogging persists for days.

Mr. Das—So, according to you, there is no prospect of being free from waterlogging in the near future and after each heavy shower we shall have to face similar pitiable circumstances.

Mr. Banerjee—Thank God, we have at last reached our destination unhurt wading through water. (259 words)

12. Write a dialogue (of about 200 words) between two pedestrians discussing the encroachment on pavements by stall-holders. (Misc '72)

Mr. Mukherjee—Where are you going, Mr. Banerje ?

Mr. Banerjee—I am going to the Lighthouse Cinema.

Mr. Mukherjee—I'm going to the Museum. So we are going in the same direction.

Mr. Banerjee—But I'm in a hurry because the time for the beginning of this show is short.

Mr. Mukherjee—But you cannot walk quickly now. The pavements of the Chowringhee area are so congested in the afternoon that—

Mr. Banerjee—This is because of the hawkers and stall-holders. They display their articles for sale on the pavement.

Mr. Mukherjee—Yes, you will hardly find any space of the pavements empty. People who are in a hurry are compelled to walk on the streets.

Mr. Banerjee—But that causes accidents. Pavements are meant for pedestrians. The authorities of the Calcutta Corporation should prevent the stall-holders from encroaching on pavements.

Mr. Mukherjee—But it is a difficult task. Sometimes Policemen drive the stall-holders away from footpaths to clear traffic congestion. But after the disappearance of the police the stall-holders re-occupy their places on pavements.

Mr. Banerjee—So this problem has no solution.

Mr. Mukherjee—I think this problem can be solved if alternative accommodation is provided to stall-holders.

Mr. Banerjee—I don't think so. Attempts were made on several occasions to provide them in some hawker's corners, but as soon as they vacated the pavements new batches occupied those places. There is special attraction for this pavement hawking because they get ready buyers amongst the pedestrians and they need not pay any tax.

Mr. Mukherjee—This problem is peculiar for Calcutta only. In the cities like Bombay and Delhi stall-holders do

not encroach on pavements. But after all we have reached our destinations. Good-bye.

Mr. Mukherjee—Good-bye. (258 words)

13. Write a dialogue (of about 250 words) between two citizens discussing the project of underground Railways in Calcutta. (Misc '74)

Mr. Dutta—Halloo Mr. Roy ! Why did you not board this train ? I feel you will be late today.

Mr. Roy—Yes, Mr. Dutta, that's right, but inspite of my best attempts I could not board this train, it was so over-crowded.

Mr. Dutta—The massive in-flow of commuters into the city creates and aggravates a number of problems in the public transport system during office hours and there is no scope for further increasing the number of trams, buses and trains.

Mr. Roy—Then, what's the remedy to this unbearable condition ?

Mr. Dutta—The Railway Board has worked out a solution to this and has also undertaken the Metropolitan Transport Project (MTP), also called the Underground Electric Railway Project or the Metro Rail for Calcutta from Dum Dum to Tollygunge, a distance of about 16·5 Km.

Mr. Roy—Yes, we have read in newspapers that the work is progressing, but the speed is very slow and nobody knows when it will be completed.

Mr. Dutta—The Calcutta Tube Railway Project has run into difficulties owing to the high cost it is likely to incur. Against the original estimate of Rs. 140 crores it is now estimated at over Rs. 250 crores. Besides, the Soviet Union now agree to supply only 17% of the equipments and stores and thus the rest would have to be bought from hard currency areas.

Mr. Roy—Then what is the prospect of this project ?

Mr. Dutta—Although the progress of work had to be slowed down owing to current economic difficulties, the Railway Ministry is trying to complete by 1980 a part of the tube, from Esplanade to Tollygunge, a distance of 7 km.

Mr. Roy—Good bye ! My train is coming.

(256 words)

14. A dialogue on "Which is more interesting—
Astronomy or Life Science ?" (WBCS '75)

Ram meets Rahim near the Victoria Memorial Hall at 4 p. m. Ram has just come from the Birla Planetarium, and Rahim from the Alipore Zoological Gardens. The two friends squat on the big lawn, and enter into a lively conversation.

Ram—I have enjoyed myself this afternoon at the Birla Planetarium. They are showing pictures of man's journey to the moon.

Rahim—I do not find much interest in those shows. So I went to the Alipore Zoological Gardens this afternoon.

Ram—But,—Are you not really interested in the latest astronomical researches ?

Rahim—Of course, I read the newspaper reports. But I find nothing interesting in stars and planets which are far away from us.

Ram—What ? I am very much surprised to know that study of stars and planets does not interest you. You are a student of science. You should know that astronomy is a very old branch of science. Think of Galileo who brought about a revolution in the world of thoughts with his astronomical researches. We wonder at the marvels of modern space researches. Man has at last broken the shackles of gravitation which kept him earth-bound for so long and reached the dreamland of Moon.

The study and researches on the genesis of the Moon and other Planets will give man a new light and understanding in respect of the good earth on which he lives.

Rahim—I admit that astronomy is an old branch of science.

I have great respect for Galileo and the modern scientists, but I am not very much enthusiastic about the mysteries which telescopes would reveal. I am more interested in the mysteries which the zoologist's microscope discovers. In other words, I prefer life sciences like zoology, botany and physiology to astronomy.

Ram—Please tell me why you consider life sciences more interesting than astronomy.

Rahim—Life sciences are new branches of science. They deal with different aspects of human life and plant life. They help us to conquer diseases and to sweeten our everyday life. Mysteries regarding the workings of different organs of the human body are undoubtedly more interesting than the mysteries of the moon.

Ram—Well, I admit that study of physiology is more interesting than study of astronomy. But what about other life sciences? Are botany and zoology as interesting as physiology?

Rahim—Yes. You know a large number of people visit the Shibpore Botanical Gardens and the Alipore Zoological Gardens everyday. Both botany and zoology are very interesting sciences. Modern botanical researches have brought about the "Green Revolution". Nowadays we know many interesting facts about the plant kingdom. In our country Sir J. C. Bose carried on many interesting experiments on plant life. Zoology is also interesting because it gives us information about Nature's dumb creatures. For example, we are startled to

know from the zoologists that there are more than five thousand types of fish. Thus botanists and zoologists help us to know many things about plants and animals which are directly associated with our lives.

Ram—Now I understand that life sciences are full of interesting things. I subscribe to your view that life sciences are more interesting than astronomy.
(525 words)

15. Write a dialogue on “Which is more popular—fiction or cinema ? And which is the greater art ?”
(WBCS '75)

Mahim meets Rames near the ‘Shahid Minar’ at 6 p.m. The two friends enjoy an evening walk together, and enter into a serious conversation.

Mahim—I enjoy this walk after 8 hours’ study in the college library. Today I finished Dickens’s popular novel “David Copperfield”.

Rames—I enjoyed a popular film-show this afternoon. It was a Bengali picture—“Amanush”.

Mahim—Why do you frequently witness cinema shows ? If you want recreation you may find it in popular novels.

Rames—Are novels really popular in the present age ? I think fiction is no longer regarded as a popular form of entertainment. The radio, television and cinema are now the most popular forms of entertainment.

Mahim—But you should remember that novels were written in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to relax the minds of the reading public. For example, Dickens attached much importance to the entertainment value of fiction. However, modern novels are more critical and artistic than old novels. Perhaps, this is why they are less popular than cinema shows.

Rames—No. The film shows are more popular than fiction for other reasons.

Mahim—Well, let me know why cinema is more popular than fiction. You frequently visit cinema halls; so you know full well the reasons of the popularity of the cinema.

Rames—Firstly, cinema is more popular than fiction because it is an ideal form of entertainment in this age of hurry. A film show is of three hours' duration. So even a busy man hard pressed for time may enjoy it. But one requires several days to read a novel. Novels were very popular in the eighteenth century because in that age people had plenty of leisure. Secondly, some cerebral exercise is necessary to understand a novel, but a film show does not require any brain work. Fiction gives pleasure to educated readers only whereas cinema gives instant joy to all. Finally, fiction gives only one type of pleasure, but cinema gives pleasures of different art-forms—drama, music and dance.

Mahim—Now I understand why cinema is more popular than fiction. But you must admit that fiction is a more dignified form of art. In fact, fiction has become a worthy rival of the epic and drama. Dickens, George Eliot, Hardy, Flaubert, Balzac and Tolstoy have raised the status of fiction as a form of art. As a form of art cinema cannot be compared with fiction. Even the most successful film artist lacks the dignity of a master of fiction. Good novels or fictions provide us with intellectual nourishment. We assimilate the contents of good books into our thought. Indeed good fictions remain our constant companion in solitude and in times of mental depression. After the day's hard labour, one feels happy to relax over an interesting novel or fiction. But this pleasure cannot be obtained from any cinema show, because people go to visit only selected pictures at long intervals. So

if cinema gives an occasional pleasure, the fiction gives a constant pleasure.

Rames—Now I am convinced that though cinema is more popular than fiction the latter is the greater art.
(513 words)

16. A dialogue between two students discussing the problem of cheating in examinations (Misc '75)

Malay—Well, Sanjib ! I don't know how you are going to get through the examination. You have hardly done a stroke of work this year.

Sanjib—Oh ! You needn't worry about me. I shall pass all right. I am well prepared. Look at these note-slips—pretty complete on all subjects.

Malay—Good Lord ! You would copy from these notes ? I did not think you were that sort. It is simply cheating. It is just as dishonest as telling lies and stealing.

Sanjib—It is only because you are a coward, that you don't try it on yourself.

Malay—Not at all. It's the cheat who is the coward, because he dares not face the results of his idleness. I don't like to pass by using unfair means, it would give me no pleasure. I would rather fail.

Sanjib—Oh ! Would you ! Well, I'm different. I don't care how I get through, if I can somehow pass the examination.

Malay—You don't seem to think of the risk. Suppose you are found out ?

Sanjib—I don't intend to be found out. Lots of fellows copy and use notes and get through and are never found out. If you are not a fool, you can manage it easily.

Malay—I am not doing that and I think you are a fool to risk it. It means expulsion from the examination and you will be belittled and exposed as a cheat in the eyes of all. Though some escape, a good many are caught. So, give it up, Sanjib, and prepare your lessons to face the trial in a fair way.
(259 words)

17. A dialogue between two men discussing the current phenomenon of world-wide inflation and its pressure on the economy of India

(Misc 75)

Mr. Sen—Have you read in today's paper that India is one of the few countries of the world which has been able to contain inflation.

Mr. Roy—Yes, we have also noticed recently that the price-hike of most of the consumer goods shows a downward trend. Surely this is the product of stern and repressive measures adopted by the Government in combating hoarding, profiteering and blackmarketing.

Mr. Sen—But you must admit that these anti-social activities were not the only reason for the abnormal price-hike which we witnessed since 1974. Price rise in India was part of the acute inflationary pressures prevailing in the international market—it was part of a global malaise. Further, inflation due to oil price-rise brought about a serious adverse movement in terms of trade and the balance of payments position.

Mr. Roy—What was the net impact of this world-wide inflation on the economy of India?

Mr. Sen—The balance of trade was sharply affected due to OPEC's decision to raise the oil-price. The Fifth Plan projections and programmes required a fresh exercise as its earlier resource estimates were shattered by the oil crisis, galloping prices and the inflationary pressures in the economy. Further, unchecked price-hike increases the cost of living, gives rise to labour unrest and creates disparities in the distribution of wealth.

Mr. Roy—The persistently rising spiral of prices also develops some anti-social tendencies like hoarding and profiteering etc.

Mr. Sen—Thanks to our able Prime Minister who achieved a unique success in arresting inflation and price-hike in India.

(245 words)

18. Write a dialogue (of about 250 words) between a boy from the city and a boy from the countryside on City-life *vs* country-life—environment and way of living. (Misc '76)

Amit—Hallo, My friend ! We read in the same college. Let us be acquainted with each other. I'm Amit Roy.
What's your name please ?

Shyamal—I'm Shyamal Bose.

Amit—Are you from a rural area ?

Shyamal—Yes, brother. I come from a village about 10 miles away from the nearest town.

Amit—Well, how do you like this new life in the college ? Do you find any difference from the life you knew at your rural school ?

Shyamal—Yes, the difference is there. In our countryside, the teachers know us personally and love us from the core of their hearts. In the serene atmosphere of village, people grow to be simple and honest. Here they are formal in their look and talk.

Amit—I admit. But there are other advantages in the city-life. There are good doctors and hospitals here but you had only a pack of quacks. Here are so many avenues for enjoyments but you have the muddy unmetalled roads inaccessible during the rains.

Shyamal—There is, of course, a dearth of good doctors because of general poverty. But Health Centre has been set up. Roads are being improved. And above all the people there enjoy open air free from smoke and pollution.

Amit—But the people there are superstitious and ignorant.

Shyamal—The villagers are not so backward nowadays. They are acquainted with scientific developments and radio and Transistors. Superstitions have almost declined. But the percentage of illiteracy is still more there for want of adequate number of primary and secondary schools.

Amit—Now I learn that village-life is not to be ignored, nor a villager. Thank you. _____ (257 words)

CHAPTER VI

CRITICISM AND APPRECIATION OF POETIC PASSAGES

1. Bring out the central idea of the following piece adding your comments on the poet's attitude towards life :—

This is the state of man ; today he puts forth
The tender leaves of hopes ; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him ;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is aripening, nips his root.

And then he fails, as I do. I have ventured,
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
This many summers in a sea of glory,
But far beyond my depth : my high-blown pride
At length broke under me and now has left me,
Weary and old with service, to the mercy
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me,
Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate ye :
I feel my heart new open'd. (WBCS '60)

Ans. The central idea of the poem is mutability of human life and variability of human fortune. The state of man is like that of a plant which grows up and bears blossoms for a while until a frost kills it to its roots. Man may also be likened to a boy swimming on a bladder, who goes down the water as the bladder bursts. Human glory is fleeting like short-lived blossoms and air-filled bladders that may burst at any time. Vain, therefore, is worldly pomp and glory.

The poem betrays a pessimistic outlook on life. Man is mortal, so the greatness he attains in life cannot continue

long. But a man's glory outlives him and perpetuates his memory in others. This acts as incentive to all our efforts to be good and great, for 'Nothing useless is or low'. As Rabindranath has said, "The flower which has fallen to the dust before it has blossomed, I know, I know it has not been lost altogether."

2. Give the substance of the following poem adding, in a separate paragraph, your comments on its theme :

One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
 One lesson which in every wind is blown,
 One lesson of two duties kept at one
 Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—
 Of toil unsever'd from tranquility !
 Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgryes
 Far noisier schemes, accomplish'd in repose
 Too great for haste, too high for rivalry !

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
 Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil,
 Still do they sleepless ministers move on,
 Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting ;
 Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,
 Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

(WBCS '61)

Ans. The poet contrasts the activities of man with those of Nature. When man goes to work he makes a great deal of needless noise. Nature's work is of far higher quality than the work of man. Its value and significance are much greater. Yet the agents of Nature are never in a hurry, neither do they make any noise. Silently and almost imperceptibly they carry on their great task. When man will be no more on earth, Nature's agents will continue to perform their noble task as noiselessly and efficiently as ever.

The insignificance of man in comparison with the greatness of Nature was a frequent theme of the Romantic

writers in England. In his narrowness man thinks a great deal of himself and of the importance of his activities in the scheme of things. He does not hesitate to quarrel with others if he thinks that he is not getting his due share of recognition. It was creditable of Romantic writers that they sought to turn man's attention away from his petty interest to the great task being performed by Nature. If winds did not blow and clouds did not bring rain, life could not continue on the earth. And yet all this great task is being performed in silence, without flutter of any kind. This silent but ceaseless activity of Nature in comparison with the petty squabbles of men is a measure of Nature's infinite superiority.

3. Develop the central idea of the following poem within about 200 words adding, in a brief paragraph, a note on the tone of the poem, referring to the words, phrases and lines in the poem which provide you with evidences of this tone :—

My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
 And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
 Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
 I struck him, and dismiss'd
 With hard words and unkiss'd,
 His mother, who was patient, being dead.
 Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
 I visited his bed,
 But found him slumbering deep,
 With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
 From his late sobbing wet.
 And I, with moan,
 Kissing away his tears, left others of my own ;
 For, on a table drawn beside his head,
 He had put, within his reach,
 A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
 A piece of glass abraded by the beach
 And six or seven shells,

A bottle with bluebells
And two French copper coins, ranged there with
careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said :
Ah, when at last we lie with tranced breath,
Not vexing thee in death,
And thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood,
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave thy wrath, and say,
"I will be sorry for thy childishness". (WBCS '65)

Ans. The poet being vexed with his motherless little son because he had disobeyed his law repeatedly, struck him and sent him to bed with rough unkind words. After sometime he visited him in bed fearing that his grief might prevent him from falling asleep. He found however that his fears were baseless and the child was sleeping peacefully with closed eyelids though they were still wet with tears he had shed before sleeping. What the poet found near the child's bed deeply touched his heart, for before he fell asleep he had gathered together all his play things in order to comfort his sad heart. The poet kissed the tear-stained eyes of the child and that night when he prayed to God he said with all humility that God might also forgive his children their trespasses seeing how ignorant they are and how weakly they understand God's beneficent purpose. God, our Father in Heaven, will not surely be less understanding than a human father.

The opening lines convey a sense of the deep tenderness that a father feels for his motherless little son. He may sometimes lose patience with him and even strike him but

before long he is visited with a feeling of repentance for what he has done. The eye lashes of the sleeping child 'yet from his late sobbing wet', the 'toys' collected by him near the bed to give himself comfort, profoundly move the father's heart and he hastens to undo the wrong he has done to the child. The closing lines of the poem are, likewise, touched by a deep sense of piety. The poet prays to the Heavenly Father that He might also take pity on His erring children when He finds 'how weakly' they understood His beneficent laws and 'of what toys' they made their joys.

4. Develop the central idea of the following poem and add, in a separate paragraph, a brief note on the poet's style and attitude :—

Ballade of The Poetic Life

The fat men go about the streets,
 The politicians play their game.
 The prudent Bishops sound retreats
 And think the martyrs much to blame ;
 Honour and love are halt and lame
 And Greed and Power are defied,
 The wild are harnessed by the tame ;
 For this the poets lived and died.

Shelley's a trademark used on sheets :
 Aloft the sky in words of flame
 We read "What Porridge had John Keats ?
 Why, Brown's ! A hundred years the same !
 Arcadia's an umbrella frame,
 Milton's a tothpaste ; from the tide
 Sappho's been dredged to rouge my Dame"—
 For this the poets lived and died.

And yet, to launch ideal fleets
 Lost regions in the stars to claim,
 To face all ruins and defeats,
 To sing a beaten world to shame.

To hold each bright impossible aim
 Deep in the heart ; to starve in Pride-
 For fame, and never know their fame—
 For this the poets lived and died.

Envoi

Princess, inscribe beneath my name
 "He never begged, he never sighed,
 He took his medicine as it came"—
 For this the poets lived—and died.

—Sir John Squire

(WBCS '66, IAS '59)

Ans.

Ballade of The Poetic Life

The poem sings of the different aspects of the poetic life. The first two stanzas show that the poet's work turned to be highly insignificant. The world is worse than before. The names of the great poets are not altogether forgotten, but their achievements are ruthlessly debased. Their names are carelessly degenerated by being associated with ordinary commodities of daily usage like porridge, toothpaste, umbrella etc. The third stanza and the shorter 'Envoi' of course strike a different note. They speak of the indomitable spirit of the poet. Despite failures and shame the poet always strives to achieve the ideal. The poet stands head and shoulder over ordinary mortals, for he is the only man who lives and dies without asking favour or expressing regret.

The poem, though nothing of a revolutionary type, has certain striking qualities. The first stanza explains how the world is going on and nobody takes any interest in the lives and works of the poets. The second stanza, in particular, has a very novel way of expressing the common man's indifference to poets and their achievements by associating their names with ordinary articles. The last two stanzas have excellent poetic grace. Here the poet gives a pessimistic view of life. All poets are not of the same opinion with

this, for Tennyson and Browning and many others considered the world good and were neither 'beaten' nor sung to 'shame'. The last three lines speak of the non-attachment of the poet's mind but the poet here perhaps forgets that there are poets who stood against Fate.

The metre and rhyme of the poem are regular with little or no variation.

5. Develop the central idea of the following poem and add, in a separate paragraph, a brief note on the poet's style and attitude to life :—

The images of Death

The hawk, the furred eagle, the smooth panther—

Images of desire and power, images of death,

These we adore and fear, these we need,

Move in the solitude of night or the tall sky,

Move with a strict grace to the one-fulfilment :

The Greenland falcon, the beautiful one,

Lives on carrion and dives inevitably to the prey.

To be human is more difficult :

To be human is to know oneself, to hold the broken
mirror.

To become aware of justice, truth, mercy.

To choose the difficult road, to aim

Crookedly, for the direct aim is failure,

To abandon the way of the hawk and the grey falcon.

These fall, and fall stupidly ;

To be human is to fall, but not stupidly ;

To suffer, but not for a simple end ;

To choose, and know the penalty of choice ;

To read the intensity of human eyes and features ;

To know the intricacy of life and the value of death ;

To remember the furred eagle and the smooth panther,

The images of Death, and death's simplicity.

—Michael Roberts

(WBCS '67)

Ans.

The Images of Death

The animals and the human beings have three things in common. They are guided by desires, lust for power and they move towards the one fulfilment which is death. But to be human in the true sense of the term is to rise above this animal level and to realize the significance of both life and death. A human being is essentially different from an animal in this that the fulfilment of his life does not lie in being led by instincts, by uncontrolled desires, by tameless lusts towards the inevitable death. For him the fulfilment lies precisely in controlling his desires, in strangling the animal in him, in self-realization and in becoming aware of justice, truth and mercy. An animal just lives and dies. The death for a human being should be the glorious end of a struggle for different goals. Human life derives its significance from the appreciation of the intricacies of life and from the realization of the value of death which are beyond the capacity of animals.

The most important thing about Michael Roberts's attitude to life is this that he discriminates between mere animal existence and the living for the fulfilment of certain definite ends through sacrifice, suffering and a growing awareness of how the significance of life is revealed through its intricacies. His style is simple, forceful and the beauty of it lies in the clear images drawn by him in his poem as well as in his terse but forceful expressions as "the tall sky" and "to hold the broken mirror."

6. Develop the central idea of the following poem and add, in a separate paragraph, a brief note on its poetical qualities and the poet's attitude :—

The Gift of India

(August, 1915 ; World War I)

Is there aught you need that my hands withhold,
 Rich gifts of raiment or grain or gold ?
 Lo ! I have flung to the East and West

Priceless treasures torn from my breast,
 And yielded the sons of my stricken womb
 To the drum-beats of duty, the sabres of doom.
 Gathered like pearls in their alien graves
 Silent they sleep by the Persian waves,
 Scattered like shells on Egyptian sands,
 They lie with pale brows and brave, broken hands,
 They are strewn like blossoms mown down by chance
 On the blood-brown meadows of Flanders and France.

Can ye measure the grief of the tears I weep
 Or compass the woe of the watch I keep ?
 Or the pride that thrills thro' my heart's despair
 And the hope that comforts the anguish of prayer ?
 And the far sad glorious vision I see
 Of the torn red banners of Victory ?

When the terror and tumult of hate shall cease
 And life be refashioned on anvils of peace,
 And your love shall offer memorial thanks
 To the comrades who fought in your dauntless ranks,
 And you honour the deeds of the deathless ones,
 Remember the blood of my martyred sons !

—*Sarojini Naidu.*

(WBCS '63, '69)

Ans. *The Gift of India*

India has offered her richest gifts to England during the World War I—her dear sons in the battles of the East and the West. They have fought valiantly and died abroad. Some lie buried in Persia and Egypt, others massacred in the bloody battlefields of Flanders and France. She silently bears her grief with pride in her sons' heroic performance, in sad expectation of the glorious victory for which she has prayed. When the fury of the war will be over and life will begin afresh in peace, England should remember these martyred sons of India who have courageously fought and died with their comrades.

The lyrical gift for which Sorojini Naidu is so famous, her enchanting music and emotional fervour have found a happy expression in the poem. The poetess has romantically described the tender pity and honest pride of Mother India in her brave sons who have died in the War. What makes the poem so attractive is the careful selection of images in which she has couched the sensuous feelings. In her attitude to War she comes very close to Rupert Brook's concept of the idealistic self immolation.

7. Express in your own words the central idea of the following poem and add a note on the poet's style and attitude to life :—

Be with me, Beauty, for the fire is dying ;
 My dog and I are old, too old for roving.
 Man, whose young passion sets the spindrift flying
 Is soon too lame to march, too cold for loving.
 I take the book and gather to the fire,
 Turning old yellow leaves ; minute by minute
 The clock ticks of my heart. A withered wire,
 Moves a thin ghost of music in the spinet.
 I cannot sail your seas, I cannot wander
 Your cornland, nor your hill-land, nor your valleys
 Ever again, nor share the battle yonder
 Where the young knight the broken squadron rallies
 Only stay quiet, while my mind remembers
 The beauty of fire from the beauty of embers.

—John Masefield.

(WBCS '70)

Ans. The poet yearns for the quiet beauty since the fire of his youth is long past. He would, rather, fall back on the memories of youthful passion in his reclining years. He remembers the glow of youth when he could wander the cornland, the hill sides and the valleys or could sail on the seas. Reminiscences of the past may kindle some joy

in his heart but at this old age all warmth and tenderness remain chilled within.

Written in a romantic style the poem is strewn with colourful images and inwoven with a tender emotion. The poet is in a nostalgic mood. Though a streak of sadness peeps through his mind, he reconciles himself to the compensation of old age—its sweet memories.

8. Express in your own words the central idea of the following poem and add a critical comment :—

O solitude ! if I must with thee dwell,
 Let it not be among the jumbled heap
 Of murky buildings ; climb with me the steep,—
 Nature's observatory—whence the dell,
 Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,
 May seem a span ; let me thy vigils keep
 'Mongst boughs pavilion'd, where the deer's
swift leap
 Startles the wild bee from the fox-glove bell.
 But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,
 Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,
 Whose words are images of thoughts refined,
 Is my soul's pleasure ; and it sure must be
 Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
 When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

(WBCS '72)

Ans. The poet longs for the bliss of solitude not in the midst of a heap of ruins, but in the heart of Nature. He draws a beautiful picture of the Nature's store-house which will give a serene environment to live in peace and quiet. There are flowers strewn over the slopes of a valley, and a stream flowing beneath, where the deer are leaping thereby startling the wild-bees. He, however, yearns to have the pleasure of a sweet conversation with an innocent mind. Yet the highest bliss is found by him when he is in the company of a kindred spirit in the midst of Nature.

What makes the poem strikingly original is the poet's abiding interest in the communion of Nature and man. The unsophisticated charms of human innocence is equated with Nature, and in a characteristically romantic style the poet weaves a pattern of images around the Central thread of his ideas. Man has, by and large, an innocent mind, which is revealed amidst the heart of Nature when he is free from all artificiality and crookedness of his mind in that calm and serene atmosphere.

9. Express in your own words the central idea of the following poem and add a critical comment :—

I met a traveller from an antique land
 Who said : Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert.....Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed :
 And on the pedestal these words appear :
 'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings :
 Look on my works, ye Mighty and despair !'
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

—P. B. Shelley.

(WBCS '73)

'Ans. In this poem Shelley speaks about a powerful king of Egypt, named Ozymandias. Ozymandias decorated his country with great works and was very proud of his achievements and power. After his death all that he had made was destroyed by the cruel hand of time leaving a vast sandy desert. Only a broken statue of the proud king lay in the midst of the desert.

It is one of the well-known sonnets of Shelley. It is

inspired with lofty thoughts on the transitoriness and futility of life as compared with the vast procession of ages. The poem is about the ruins of Egyptian antiquity engulfed by a vast depopulated desert.

The poet has treated the historical theme lyrically. So the sonnet makes a direct and powerful appeal to our imagination. This sonnet is adorned with exquisite images and striking phrases. The last three lines of the sonnet are an ironic commentary on the vaunting pride of Ozymandias who called himself King of Kings and considered himself all-wise and all-powerful and immortal through his achievements but whose pride was humbled to the dust by the Spirit of Time.

10. Express in your own words the central idea of the following poem and add a critical comment :

The lost days of my life until today,
 What were they, could I see them on the street
 Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
 Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
 Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
 Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
 Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
 The throats of men in Hell, who thirst away?
 I do not see them here : but after death
 God knows I know the faces I shall see,
 Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.
 'I am thyself—what hast thou done to me ?'
 'And I—and I—thyself', (lo ! each one saith)
 'And thou thyself to all eternity !'

(WBCS '74)

Ans. The poet makes a stock-taking of his life. He is not sure whether his past activities would shape his destiny in future. But he knows it full well that the activities of his past life would determine his fate in the life beyond death. He is recollecting his past deeds with remorse as to

how far he idled away the spring-time of his existence and the persons whom he wronged in some way or other in his early life and to whom his spirit would be answerable after death.

It is a personal poem. In a sombre mood the poet looks before and after. The poet firmly believes in the immortality of the human soul. He looks upon death as a gateway to a new life. He is a visionary. The picture of life beyond death has given a religious tone to the poem. This is virtually a pen picture of the mind of an aged person who has retired into himself and sees the visions of death.

11. Express in your own words the central idea of the following poem and add a critical comment :—

THE CHOICE

Think thou and act ; tomorrow thou shalt die.
 Outstretched in the sun's warmth upon the shore,
 Thou say 'st, "Man's measured path is all gone o'er.
 Up all his years, steeply, with strain and sigh,
 Man climb until he touched the truth ; and I,
 Even I, am he whom it was destined for".
 How should this be ? Art thou then so much more
 Than they who sowed, that thou shouldst reap
thereby ?
 Nay, come up hither. From 'his wave-washed mound
 Unto the furthest flood-brim look with me ;
 Then reach on with thy thought till it be drown'd.
 Miles and miles distant though the last line be,
 And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues
beyond,—

Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.

—D. G. Rossetti. (*WBCS* '75)

Ans. The poet says that we should make the best use of our short span of life on earth. Life shines in ceaseless activities. Instead of enjoying the fruits of our predecessors' labours we should make our best efforts to realize the true

meaning of life. We should not rest on our oars but go on exploring truths till the last day of our lives.

"The Choice" is one of the well-known sonnets of D. G. Rossetti, the leader of the Pre-Raphaelite School of poetry in the Victorian age. It presents Rossetti at his best ; but it is not the Rossetti who was best known and most admired by his early followers.

Hugh Walker observes : "In his verse there is no thought, as such, it is all pure art." But in the present poem there is a clearness and definiteness of thought as well as a beauty of expression.

12. State in your own words in English the central idea of the poem given below and add a brief (not exceeding ten sentences) critical comment—

There is a silence where hath been no sound ;
 There is a silence where no sound may be ;
 In the cold grave, under the deep, deep sea,
 Or in wide desert, where no life is found,
 Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound.
 No voice is hushed, no life treads silently ;
 But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,
 That never spoke, over the idle ground.
 But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
 Of antique places, where Man hath been,
 Though the dun ox, or wild hyaena, calls,
 And owls that flit continually between,
 Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan,
 There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

(WBCS '76)

Ans. Silence reigns in the deep sea. So does it in the vast desert which sleeps without any sign of life anywhere. Only clouds make their speechless movement over it. But a true and meaningful silence reigns in ruined places where life throbbed in the past and still throbs at present though in a different form.

The poet here meditates on silence and has discovered two aspects of it. One is that which is associated with regions that have been complete strangers to human presence. But the poet's sensitive soul can think of a different aspect of silence that remains in regions carrying the memory of man. That silence, the poet trusts, is more effective and true, for, in a strange way, it seems to speak of beings that once lived and breathed but are now no more. This silence is eerie as it seems to have a tongue.

This is a sonnet with the rhyme-scheme as *a b b a a b b a* in the octave portion and *c d c d e e* in the sestet. There is, however, a single, coherent thought, running through the two parts of the sonnet. That helps in giving an admirable unity of impression.

CHAPTER VII

AMPLIFICATIONS, WRITING SHORT NOTES ETC.

1. Amplify the idea contained in the following :—

- (i) A stitch in time saves nine. (Misc. '67)
- (ii) The pen is mightier than the sword. (Misc. '67, '72)
- (iii) Example is better than precept. (Misc. '67)
- (iv) "Handsome is that handsome does" (Misc. '68)
- (v) "He prayeth best who loveth best,
All things, both great and small." (Misc. '68)
- (vi) "Authority causes some men to grow, others to
swell." How it reflects on the Civil Servants in
India ? (WBCS '56)
- (vii) "The two great inventions of the human mind
are writing and money—the common language
of intelligence and the common language of
self-interest." (WBCS '56)

(viii) To enjoy liberty we must control ourselves.

(Misc '72)

(ix) Our antagonist is our helper.

(Misc '72)

1. (i) A stitch in time saves nine (Misc '67)

The proverb means that a timely stitching up of a small rent in clothes stops it from getting wider and thereby necessitating many more stitches to mend it. What is true of torn clothes is true of boots, boxes, houses, ships, walls, bridges, in a word of everything that needs mending. If a little more care is taken in the early stages of diseases, or political rifts or of growing indiscipline among children, a lot of trouble can be avoided in future. Nothing should be neglected or ignored at the primary stage as that may develop into a veritable nuisance in future. (102 words)

1. (ii) The pen is mightier than the sword.

(Misc '76, '72)

The central idea of this saying is that a writer is more powerful than a soldier. The glory of the sword is in the blood it has spilt, the cities it has razed to the ground. But when a great writer wields his pen he has much more to give the world than even any great warrior. A writer's role is creative, not destructive. It is the language of the pen and not the language of the sword that gives us new values, new standards, new hopes to live with. Alexander and Napoleon may be forgotten but Vyasa, Valmiki, Homer will be remembered with deep devotion for all ages to come. (111 words)

1. (iii) Example is better than precept (Misc '67)

Vague precepts or moral instructions unsupported by examples have little influence on human minds. If our words and actions disagree, the latter have far more influence than the former. When a rich and luxurious man preaches the doctrine of plain living or a man without character preaches moral lessons, nobody cares to listen to him. We

have seen Buddha, Jesus Christ and Gandhiji had great influence on the mass of people only because they practised what they preached. We should deter from folly not merely by its evil consequences to ourselves but also by the consideration that the examples set by us may be imitated by others. (107 words)

1. (iv) Handsome is that handsome does (*Misc '68*)

A tree is better known by its fruits ; similarly a man by his actions. Whatever charm a man's outward appearance may have, his dark deeds make him look darker still. It is not so much the looks but the good deeds which endear a man to his fellow beings. Nobility of character and honest actions constitute true beauty. It has a lasting charm and it is universally applauded. After all beauty is the lover's gift and does not belong to a man who cherishes ill-will or evil designs. It is goodness and loving care that one bestows upon others which make him appear truly handsome. However commonplace a mother's looks may be, to her son her affectionate and tender care make her look so angelic. Indeed, to a casual observer, a good looking man may have some charm, but to a keen observer he alone is handsome who does good things to people. (153 words)

1. (v) "He prayeth best who loveth best
All things, both great and small."

(*Misc '68*)

Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* killed an innocent sea-bird, Albatross, with his cross-bow and suffered immensely for it. He did considerable penance in unbearable heat and drought. Until he loved the slimy creatures of the sea his efforts to pray were all in vain. No sooner had he realised the blessedness of love for even the meanest creatures than he was absolved of his sin. As love welled out of his heart, down came the merciful rain to relieve him of his agony. The *Ancient Mariner* had learnt the great lesson that love and reverence to all earthly beings were all that a man could

offer as the best prayer to God. The best form of prayer is a man's love for his neighbours and fellow-beings. However big and impressive, or small and insignificant may be the creatures of God, they are all bound by the law of love. Hence, in love alone can a man reach his prayer to God.

(159 words)

1. (vi) "Authority causes some men to grow, others to swell." How it reflects on the Civil Servants in India ?
(WBCS '56)

India is today a free Sovereign Republic with a democratic form of Government which aims at the establishment of a socialistic pattern of society. A democracy is commonly looked upon as a Government by the people and for the people. It implies that in a democratic State it is the people who count, and those who are called upon to carry on administration are expected to consider themselves as agents and servants of the people. But under a bureaucracy, as the Government was during the British regime, administration is carried on by a hierarchy of officers having little contact with the people. Under a republican form of Government, the high-officials in the administration have got to shed their superiority complex and consider themselves as the servants of the people and not their masters. Unfortunately, red-tapeism and stiff-necked officialism, which are legacies of the old regime, are still rampant in Government offices. Sudden elevation or promotion to higher posts or direct appointment to such coveted posts often swell the occupants ; their heads are turned, so to say, by the prosperity and dignity of their new position and they become arrogant and boastful and disdain their brethren on whom fortune has not smiled. This is certainly an abuse of the authority bestowed on them. The high officials can do immense good to the staff and the people in general if they exercise their authority in proper way, be courteous and sympathetic and at the same time be martinet, honest and above any bias or dogmas. These are the fundamental

principles on which the rules of conduct of Government servants in free India are based. (272 words)

1. (vii) "The two greatest inventions of the human mind are writing and money—the common language of intelligence and the common language of self-interest." (WBCS '56)

The word "wealth" is used in a very wide sense to comprise many things of value. But in a restricted and commonly accepted sense wealth means money. An individual or a nation which possesses enough money is therefore called wealthy or rich. In the materialistic world of today money is regarded as sole criterion of progress. It facilitates ordinary sale and purchase, trade and commerce and day to day transactions. Before the invention of money, barter was the common means of exchange of commodities. This would involve much inconvenience and confusion in receipts and payments of prices. Introduction of coins and notes has led to regularization and standardization of exchange of necessities of life, just as invention of language has contributed to easy communication of ideas. Before the invention of writing, men would seek to express their ideas by means of signs, carvings, and hieroglyphic or picture-writing, which were very crude vehicles of expression. Human intellect manifests itself now in diverse ways in diverse forms of writing. Money is, however, primarily used for furtherance of personal or collective interests, purely material. Money enables each individual to spend his income in such a way that each unit of money spent shall bring him the largest utility. Money may thus be characterised as the common language of self-interest, just as writing may be described as the common language of intellect. (228 words)

1. (viii) To enjoy liberty we must control ourselves (Misc '72)

Liberty is sometimes mis-interpreted as freedom from the restraint of law. This type of liberty exists only in the

jungles. In a civilized society one cannot enjoy absolute liberty. Liberty is based on the recognition of the rights of other people and a proper attitude of respect for Law, which regulates relations between individuals and maintains social equilibrium. Every nation has its own concept of liberty. Although liberty warrants the enjoyment of Fundamental Rights by each individual, whenever it infringes or violates the Law of the country it is prevented by the machinery of the State. The government of every country imposes some restrictions on the liberty of its people by framing of Laws. The unrestrained use of liberty may give rise to fights among themselves, revolts and other anti-social activities and the liberty of the community itself may be endangered. Thus on all showing we must control ourselves in order to enjoy liberty. (154 words)

1. (ix) Our antagonist is our helper (Misc '72)

Thomas Hardy has described human life as a drama of pain. Indeed, we feel that our life is full of troubles and tribulations. In the present century we are engaged in a grim struggle for existence. But the troubles and hardships of modern life have not tamed the spirit of man. In this century we have made spectacular progress in all spheres of life. The problems and hardships of modern life have strengthened our moral fibre and given us a moral stamina.

The history of human civilization shows that worthy men never succumb to difficulties. Difficulties are stern instructors. The true worker in any sphere is continually grappling with difficulties. His very failure teaches him fortitude because he knows "Failures are the pillars of success." It is our duty to surmount difficulties. We should remember that difficulty is a stern instructor. He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper. (158 words)

2. Amplify the idea contained in—

- (i) If God came to me with Truth in one hand and

- search for Truth in the other, I should choose
the latter (Misc '74)
- (ii) The greatest of all faults is to be conscious of
none (Misc '74)
- (iii) Man does not live by bread alone (Misc '74)
- (iv) Cowards die many times before their death
(Misc '75)
- (v) Revenge is a kind of wild justice
(IAS '63, Misc '75)
- (vi) Variety is the spice of life (Misc '75)
- (vii) One man's meat is another man's poison
(IAS '67, Misc '76)
- (viii) Two wrongs do not make a right (Misc '76)
- (ix) The paths of glory lead but to the grave
(Misc '76)

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2. (i) If God came to me with Truth in one hand
and search for Truth in the other, I should
choose the latter (Misc '74)

Life is a dynamic process. It shines in ceaseless activities. The activities of human beings are of different types. Intellectual and spiritual activities are directed towards search for truth.

Exploration of truth is the business of artists and scientists. Artists try to know the eternal truths of life. Thus Keats, a great romantic poet of England, arrives at the conclusion that 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'. Scientists are always busy exploring the true nature of things. The great religious teachers of the world dedicated their lives to the search for truth. Thus Buddha did not accept the truths which had been offered to him by saints and hermits, but dedicated his life to search for truth and after many years came to know it himself.

The Truth which is offered in a ready-made form amounts to a simple theory or belief but the Truth which is obtained through our own exertions and searches is a real and perfect thing. (159 words)

2. (ii) The greatest of all faults is to be conscious of
none (Misc '74)

Man is mortal. He has many faults and foibles. Even the great men have their defects and they are not free from faults. In fact, the great men are always conscious of their faults and limitations. We cannot forget Newton's remark about the limitations of his knowledge. Tragedies occur when worthy men suffer for their faults. Great tragic writers clearly bring out the faults of men. In his great tragedies like 'Hamlet', 'Othello', 'King Lear' and 'Macbeth' Shakespeare shows how minor faults of worthy men cause tragedies.

There are some men who look upon themselves as symbols of perfection. They proudly declare that they have no faults. Such men are undoubtedly fools because they are not conscious of the limitations of mankind. With prosperity and fame they become arrogant and boastful and forget that they as human beings are victims of follies and foibles and will vanish like bubbles from the memories of others. (154 words)

2. (iii) Man does not live by bread alone (Misc '74)

Man is the most perfect creature of God. He is altogether different from other creatures because he has powers of thinking and reasoning. Indeed, man is God-like in the exercise of his intellectual and spiritual powers. Moreover, unlike other creatures who struggle for procurement of food for their mere existence, the human beings have some inner significance of life and the procurement of bread and material gratifications are not the 'be-all and end-all' of their life.

A man who has no divine spark in him can make material comforts his primary concern in life. Such a man leads the life of an animal. There is no denying that the man is guided by some instincts which are common to all animals. Thus all men work hard so that they may get food and shelter, but this is not all. Man transcends his animal

instincts and aspires to become God-like in his spiritual powers. (152 words)

2. (iv) Cowards die many times before their death
(Misc '75)

Shakespeare's Julius Ceaser spoke this to brush aside his wife's fears and superstitions. He declared this with the assertion that the valient would never taste of death but once. Man is mortal and one day he must die. Be he a coward or a man of courage he will die but once. But the cowards experience death-like sufferings on many occasions in their life before actual death. They move always under the shadow of fear of death. They fear their car to turn turtle, their vessel to capsize, their plane to catch fire, their house-roof to fall down. They feel death lying in waiting for them in all conceivable corners with the result that they feel shaky and diffident in any enterprise. A brave man takes up a cause and fights for it unto the last. He never flinches from it for fear of consequences and thus the valiant alone wins the laurels of victory. (155 words)

2. (v) Revenge is a kind of wild justice.

(IAS '63, Misc. '75)

Revenge is very aptly described as a kind of wild justice. It is the law of the jungle and most unsuited for a civilized society. Wild justice is one in which only wild animals indulge and it excludes forgiveness, charity and tolerance, which are the attributes of human beings. It is similar to the sayings "an eye for an eye" and "a tooth for a tooth". Passions and animal instincts in man inspire him to inflict the same calamity back on the wrong-doer by taking law in his own hand. No amount of revenge can make the wrong-doer change his mind. If he is not sufficiently strong to retaliate the revenger just now, he will be on the look out for an opportunity of paying back the debt. Thus revenge sets into motion a vicious circle which leads to violence, anarchy and indiscipline. On the other hand, forgiveness is the noblest revenge. (152 words)

2. (vi) Variety is the spice of life (Misc '75)

Variety makes life interesting and enjoyable. As different spices make the dishes tasty and palatable and without such variation even the best food would sometimes appear to be insipid and unsatisfactory, so with our life. In absence of variety or change it loses all its charms and becomes an intolerable burden. Our mind feels bored and tired if it remains occupied with a single thing for a long time at a stretch. Rest from any prescribed labour, recourse to something away from the main field of activity, brings in the variety and makes life worth living. Life would be quite as much unbearable even in the midst of continuous pleasures and enjoyments as it is intolerable under a long period of monotonous work. For achieving happiness and prosperity in life, variety in the form of work and leisure is indispensable. Thus the craving for variety in every sphere of life is universal. (152 words)

2. (vii) One man's meat is another man's poison

(IAS '67, Misc '76)

The proverb says that meat is a good tasty food for the non-vegetarians but to others its very presence may be nauseating. The proverb embodies a truth that there are varieties of men who differ in point of attitude and outlook, mood and manner. Life is a great mystery. It appeals to different men in different ways and their interests are often diametrically opposed.

Take for example, the worship of God and the Guru. With the average old Indians, the thought of God and the Guru gets a priority over all other material considerations. But with the young who still look at life through the spectacles of romance, God and Guru have no significance; what is real is this life and its enjoyment. In the tremulous heart of a young maiden, the sight of a handsome youngman is supposed to cause a ripple, but to a young widow, the very thought is considered a sin. Thus what is nectar to one may often be poison to the other. (168 words)

2. (viii) Two wrongs do not make a right (Misc 76)

Two wrongs signify that something is done taking law in one's own hand as revenge or lesson against some wrong done to one earlier by the other. This second wrong thing done in retaliation of the first wrong cannot be justified in any way as a right thing done. Revenge is a kind of wild justice and hence it cannot right any wrong done by the other, rather it sets into motion a vicious circle to which there is no end.

It is often found that when a pickpocket or a thief is caught, he is severely beaten by the public, sometimes leading to his death. This action cannot obviously be justified and these group of men, if caught, would also be subjected to conviction. The right course would have been to hand over the criminal to the police for suitable action. In other spheres also, repetition of errors or repetition of wrongs only multiplies the offence rather than justifying the action. (162 words)

2. (ix) The paths of glory lead but to the grave

(Misc 76)

If life is imagined as the field of sports, glory may be taken to be its goal. Men and women are fighting side by side to reach this goal sooner or later and wear the garland of glory. The paths which lead to the glory also lead to the graveyard, because all men are mortal.

This saying has a deeper meaning underneath. Whatever we may do to reach the goal of glory, we must not forget that death awaits us in the end. It is a mighty leveller, making no distinction between kings and clowns, maids and widows, fops and flirts. Glories are mere shadows and not substantial things. A man, therefore, should not boast of the pomp of power, beauty, wealth and any kind of material gain. For, the rich and the poor await alike the inevitable hour of death.

The line however should not be quoted as an apology for idleness, but only as a check to pride. (160 words)

3. Do you think it essential for India to have a national language? Justify or criticise the efforts of the Government of India to make Hindi the national language of the country. (Misc. '67)

The Indians, though they are fundamentally the same do not speak the same language. There are different languages and different dialects in different Indian States and villages; they are so different from each other that sometimes a man from one State does not understand a word of a man from the neighbouring State though their cultural background and mental make-up are the same. It is a common language that can only serve as a link among the Indian States. Hence India does need a national language for its integrated existence.

But our Government is not justified in making Hindi the national language of the country only because it is spoken and understood by the largest section of the Indians and it enjoins the sanction of the party in power. The kind of Hindi that most Indians speak are just dialects, quite different from the sophisticated Hindi. Moreover the people of West Bengal and of South India are quite innocent of Hindi. There are other reasons also why Hindi should not be made the national language. Firstly, Hindi is not yet matured enough to replace English. Its vocabulary is weak, its literature is still in infancy and science books in Hindi are scarce. No language can be improved overnight by governmental backing; the growth of a language is a slow and steady progress. The fear of 'Hindi Imperialism' and the dis-advantageous position of the non-Hindi people in respect of service and other State affairs cannot be totally ignored.

The Constitution of India provided that the official language of the Union should be Hindi in Devnagri-Script and that English should continue till 1965. In view of the anti-Hindi agitation in South India, the Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 1967 was passed, which provided that English should remain the associate official language indef-

nately until all the States where Hindi is not the official language agree to its replacement solely by Hindi and this is ratified by the two House of Parliament. Hindi States corresponding with non-Hindi States would send their communication in Hindi in a gradual process. It was also felt that the three-language formula would not only be a better solution for the vexed language controversy but would also ensure the unity of the country. (390 words)

4. Researches in Fundamental sciences should be given preference to those in Applied sciences"—
Do you agree? (WBCS '56)

Broadly speaking, science is the generalization of human knowledge and experience. From the earliest times man's inherent curiosity has been prompting him to pry into the mysteries of Nature and to bring under his control and possession Nature's forces and bounties. By means of observation and experiments, theories and principles relating to life and matter have been evolved from age to age. They are the basis of what we now call the Fundamental Sciences. But scientific theories and hypotheses, even when recognised as laws, are often rejected when new theories are arrived at after rigid tests and investigations. Correctness of scientific principle has to be judged by its practical application and this process has led to development of the Applied sciences. The trend of modern science has been towards objectivity—towards exactitude. But there is the risk of this trend going too far. The use of the Applied Sciences in harnessing the forces of Nature, in exploiting her resources and in contributing to the amenities of life can hardly be exaggerated. But sudden and unexpected failures and reverses sometimes make scientists ponder and revise their theories. This necessitates further researches in the Fundamental Sciences. Whether the results of application of a scientific principle are conducive to good or evil has to be judged in the process of experiments, for which intensive researches in the Fundamental Sciences are of great nece-

ssity. This is why the inventors of Atom and Hydrogen bombs are busy in investigating into possibilities of putting atomic energy to the use of mankind for its welfare.

(258 words)

5. "The new sources of atomic energy offer so many opportunities for advance that we are now facing a new era in Chemistry and Biology"—Explain and illustrate. What are the other uses of Atomic energy for peaceful purposes? (WBCS '53, '56)

A new era in human history opened when the atomic energy was harnessed to the peaceful uses of man. Of all scientific researches effected by the atomic energy and the radioactive materials, the greatest advances have been achieved in Chemistry and Biology. Radioactive isotopes made from chemical elements such as iron, phosphorous, carbon or iodine (by bombarding the atoms in these materials with neutrons in a nuclear reactor) can be used as *tracers*, when placed in animals, plants, liquids, fertilizers etc. and can also be used like radium for the treatment of tumours, cancer, blood disorders and other diseases. The chemical actions relating to wear of tyres or machine parts, corrosions, cleaning of various industrial goods, detection of tiniest flaws and thickness of plastic films, paper, rubber, tin and sheet materials during processing are done effectively by the radioactive isotopes. Atomic power is also used in producing gasoline synthetically from coal and oil, tracing the flow of liquid through pipelines and sterilizing and preserving foods. Nuclear radiation is also being applied in plant physiology and animal husbandry. One of the most successful applications of atomic energy has been in the use of radioactive tracers in fertilizers. By subjecting seeds or plants to varying amounts of direct radiation, biologists can produce many mutations and changes and, thus, hardier and more productive crops. By using radioactive isotopes one can label or mark a compound and follow

up metabolism in the body. By labelling animals, inheritance deductions can also be made.

It is reported that the Soviet Scientists are trying to convert the dreary plains of Siberia into fruitful plains with the help of it. They also started the world's atomic powered electricity plant in the Soviet Union in June 1954. Similar plants have been installed in the U.S.A. and the U.K. Many other countries, including India, are now preparing for generating electricity from this atomic plant. The energy released in the fission of one kilogram of Uranium is approximately equal to the energy produced by 2.5 million kilogram of high grade coal. Thus a small quantity of this materials can light the whole city or drive a ship or work a mill for years. The atomic-powered American submarine *Nautilus* travelled 66,000 miles on a lump of Uranium smaller than a bulb.

Atomic energy can also be utilised in locomotives and aircrafts. The space conquest has much advanced due to the invention of this nuclear energy. Atomic clocks aid scientists to determine the origin of earth and the age of any antiquities.

Atomic era is full of potentialities and many new advantages and uses are yet to be explored. (435 words)

6. What is the relation between population growth and poverty ? (WBCS '68, '72, Misc '74)

Ans. It was upheld in the Population Conference in Bukharest in Aug. '74 that the goal of stabilization of population by the end of this century, should be achieved by inducing the affluent countries to re-structure the international economy and reduce the poverty gap, and establishing a link between population control and redistribution of resources. The real problem of the developing countries is not people but poverty, a hydra-headed monster. Population control is only one of several aspects of poverty, the others being lack of education, health care, decent shelter and living conditions.

Demographically, the world may be divided into two groups of countries. First, the communist countries, notably China, who maintain that population is an asset and not a liability and the predictions of doom because of over-population is a plot of the big Powers to maintain their dominance over the third World. Poverty existing in Africa, Asia and Latin America was due to the continuing economic hold maintained by the Super Powers. The population problem is one of development rather than poverty. The affluent nations must curb their consumerism and the resources, so released, should be channelised for the development of the third World regions.

The second group of countries comprise the industrialized societies which lay stress on the birth control rather than on economic growth. The population plan of action, formulated by the UN World Population Conference, has commended reduction of birth rate to an average of 30 per thousand by 1985 and implementation of policies designed to bring birth rates down in the developing countries. The third view emphasizes an integrated approach. They hold that a concerted and sustained effort should be adopted to control the population at the same time as the country's economy is developed.

In the developing countries, with two-thirds of the world's people and some of the highest rates of population growth, there are insufficient schools and teachers, insufficient foods, hospitals and living shelters, and acute shortage of jobs for the young adults. This unmanageable population pressure leads to social tensions, political turbulence and the irrational eruption into extremism. So the only way of bringing peace and prosperity in the World is to concentrate all efforts on reducing both poverty and the growth rate of population.

7. All Indian scientists living abroad should be brought back (WBCS '69)

The question of "brain-drain" or flight of talent from

this country to any foreign land has become very vital since this loss of scientists for a developing country like India is considerable. The question of stopping this flight of talent from this country becomes a live issue whenever any Indian repatriate in another country achieves some distinction in his sphere of work. Thus it cropped up when the great scientists like Dr. Narlikar, Dr. Hargovind Khorana, or Dr. S. Chandrasekhar, who were India-born but settled in U.K. or U.S.A. flashed in the news for their achievements. The migrators are often accused for their greed for money and lack of a sense of duty to their motherland. But the migrating scientists after completion of their scientific, technological or academic training abroad failed to find any berth or appointment or even appreciation in this country, and hence they were forced to settle in those foreign lands. Moreover, if all these scientists are brought back here, it will only increase unemployment among them. (166 words)

8. What wonders and treasures does the sea hold for us in her depths ? (CL '56)

Not only gems, like priceless pearls so keenly sought after, but also numerous other things of immense value and interest lie in the depths of the sea. The ocean is Nature's inexhaustible treasure-house, and much of its treasures lie unexplored inspite of ceaseless human efforts to explore them. The seas cover about 73 per cent of the earth's area and in places they are miles and miles deep. Like the great heights, the great depths also remain a perpetual mystery to man. Valuable chemical substance have been extracted from the undrinkable waters of the sea. Scientific appliances and methods have been devised to dive to the inmost depth of the sea for the study of flora and fauna in the farthest depths, many of which are of great value to mankind. Important animals living on the bottom are the molluses (including pearl oysters), which are sometimes used for human food. The coral builders are important because they build up coral reefs and islands. The pearl

fisheries of India and its contiguous countries and elaborate methods of deep sea fishing all the world over are striving to force the seas to give up some of their treasures. But even now we know very little about the seas and the vast stores of treasures that lie in their unfathomed caves.

(217 words)

9. What is meant by 'automation'? Discuss the problem of introducing automation in India (Misc. '68)

Automation is a system or method in which many or all of the processes are automatically performed or controlled by computers or electronic devices. Automation replaces human operations by machines. It brings a new era of industrial revolution in which no human decision or management is needed and in which the push-button run by its own electric brain produces and distributes its abundant wealth. It works with greater speed, efficiency and accuracy.

In a highly developed capitalist economy like America or the U. K. where monopolism controls the State's economy, automation may increase the efficiency of production and the profit as well by reducing the cost of operation. Fear of unemployment is also less there because of the existence of social insurance schemes and high standard of living. But in an imperfect capitalist economy like ours, where national monopoly capital has not yet developed and there exist a large number of small and private industries in which the owners themselves work and, moreover, where the unemployment figure is on a steep increase, automation will not only make unemployment more acute but throw the economy into a deep depression. Another feature would be a rapid fall in the purchasing power of our working millions, who are ultimate purchasers of goods and already have very poor purchasing power. As a result, huge stocks of goods produced through automation will remain unsold year after year and depression will increase. The sponsors of automation, however, uphold that only a small number of computers are being used in this country in special cases like the LIC

and banks, in which speed, accuracy and saving of office space are important considerations in view of the enormous number of cases handled. Introduction of automation, though of a very limited kind, has already created misunderstanding and unrest among workers who are strongly opposed to it. (306 words)

10. What is tourism? How will you promote it?

What benefits will India derive from its promotion?

(WBCS '57, CL '67)

Tourism is a much used word which means "organised touring". The main purpose of such touring is more educational than recreative. It is inspired as much by an adventurous spirit as by a yearning for knowledge. Touring never means haphazard touring. The organized touring instead of filling our minds with a few desultory informations gives us a fuller knowledge of the visited places and of their people and their history and culture.

Development of tourism is now receiving full attention of the Central and State Govts. India has much to offer to the tourists from snow-capped peaks to historical relics and places of cultural interest. The Kashmir Valley is the tourists' paradise. The festivals like Dasara in Mysore, the excavation in Ajanta, Ellora and Konarak, and the hill stations of Darjeeling, Mussoorie and Simla offer great attractions to the tourists. The important cities like Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and Bangalore, the magnificent Tajmahal and the religious centres of Varanasi, Hardwar and Belur draw a good number of visitors, both Indians and foreigners. Elaborate arrangements are now being made by the Tourist Departments in the States and in the Centre in promoting foreign as well as home tourism by setting up Tourist Information Centres, by publishing various pamphlets and literatures on places of tourist attractions, by constructing Tourist Bungalows, Guest Houses and good hotels, by providing tourist cars and other transport facilities and by removing various travel barriers.

From the promotion of tourism India will derive several benefits. Firstly, Indian society, inspired by an adventurous spirit, will not be in the rut in which at present it seems to be. Secondly, promotion of tourism will automatically lead to the improvements of road and transport system and to the emergence of many more modern hotels and guest houses. But the most important benefit will be the flowing in of more foreign currency and more revenues to the Central and State budgets and boosting up of local trades.

(324 words)

11. Suggest, in about 300 words, the steps you would take for the solution of the transport problem in Calcutta (WBCS '60, CL '63, '67, Misc '68)

The transport problem in Calcutta has now become very acute. The primary reason of this increasing congestion is of course enormous increase of population in the city due to continuous influx of refugees from East Pakistan. Although more tram-cars and buses are plying in the city streets than in previous years, the over-crowding of trams and buses, specially in peak hours amply demonstrate that even the fringe of the problem has not been touched. Taxis are not available when needed. It is almost impossible to get in or get down from a bus or a tram at any mid-way stoppage. Street accidents are becoming matters of daily occurrence due to rash driving and carelessness of pedestrians and passengers. Slow-moving vehicles like hand-carts, bullock-carts, ricksaws, have been another menace. Most of our streets are not also sufficiently wide to accommodate more tram-cars and buses.

The most effective solution of the problem seems to lie in the construction of a sub-way and a circular railway, but this ambitious scheme is not likely to be implemented in the near future for want of funds. Thus there is no alternative to introducing more buses and taxis in the city so as to remove the ever-widening imbalance between the means of transport and their users. Where possible double-deckers

should replace the old-type single-decker buses so as to provide accommodation for a larger travelling public. Care should be taken to keep the roads in a good state of repair. The bullock-carts and rickshaws, which are often responsible for traffic-jamming, should be replaced by motor-vans and auto-rickshaws. It is necessary to instil into the travelling public and the drivers of buses and cars a keen road sense and obedience to traffic rules. For this purpose the Traffic Police should also be reorganised and trained on modern lines. (300 words)

12. What do you understand by Green Revolution ?
What has been its impact on the economy of the country ?
(Misc '72, CL '73)

Green Revolution signifies the transformation from food shortage to self-sufficiency brought about by a breakthrough in farming with the help of voluntary changes in technology. It is a product of close co-ordination among the various Central and State agencies and farm universities in India and the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation in the USA. Co-operation among them helped in the evolution of the new technology based on high-yielding varieties of seed, concentrated doses of fertilizers, assured sources of perennial irrigation, application of insecticides and improved types of machinery. The Green Revolution in India has actually been achieved in respect of wheat. While a number of new high-yielding varieties of wheat have been evolved, such proved varieties of high-yielding rice-seeds are still in the making. Increased production of rice is, however, significant in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal by the use of such improved varieties of rice-seeds. The main factors contributing to the Green Revolution are—(i) high-yielding seeds, (ii) fertilizers, (iii) insecticides, (iv) better water-management and (v) improved machinery. The Green Revolution has brought about profound socio-economic changes in the country. Increased productivity of land has removed the poverty of the farmer to some extent.

Its progress is however slow in non-irrigated areas and the benefit of increased production generally goes to the big farmers. The small farmers on the other hand suffer on account of rise in costs, scarcity of labour and high land values. Besides, the greater attention to wheat and rice cultivation may result in the fall of aggregate output of non-food crops. (252 words)

13. What are your suggestions for accelerating rural development in India? (Misc '72)

Since agriculture is the mainstay of Indian economy, the development of agriculture plays an important role in the problem of rural development. For all round development of rural areas, the Community Development Projects were launched throughout the country since Oct. 1952 and by this time all the villages have been covered by development blocks. The development programme is planned and implemented by the villagers themselves, the Government offering only technical guidance and financial assistance through these blocks. Agriculture receives the highest priority in the programme. Other objectives are—development of roads and communications, health and sanitation, maternity benefit and child welfare, education, housing, cottage & small-scale industries and uplift of backward classes and tribes.

The abolition of the Zamindaries in India followed by land-reform and redistribution of lands to land-less peasants has brought a far-reaching socio-economic revolution in the countryside. For the economic development of the rural India, rapid increase in agricultural production and marketable surplus in foodgrains are absolutely necessary. This can be achieved through co-operative farming with improved seeds, fertilisers, irrigated water and improved agricultural implements and by the introduction of 2 to 3 crops a year. Co-operative Societies should be strengthened to meet the problem of rural indebtedness. Extension of rural electrification will revitalize the cottage and small-scale industries

in villages and thereby open employment opportunities to the rural people. The family planning programme should also be popularised in villages. (228 words)

14. In what respects has the position of women changed in India since independence ? (WBCS '75)

According to the ancient history, in the past ages Indian women were given all sorts of freedom and they enjoyed high social status. But with the coming of the Muslims things began to change. The Hindu girls became targets of the Muslim rulers' lust. So they had to be removed behind screen. They became more backward during British rule in India. The British diplomats knew full well that in case Indian women were enlightened they would change the slavish outlook of the next generation ; so they managed to frame certain unfavourable social laws declaring women as socially low.

India won freedom on August 15, 1947 ; and since then Indian women have been improving their position in all spheres of life. After independence female education has made remarkable progress in both urban and rural areas of this vast country. Today Indian women have cast off their inferiority complex, and they are marching side by side with men in every walk of life. Women of India have held very high positions since independence—Prime Minister of India, Ministers of the Union and the States, Governors, High Commissioners and Ambassadors and All-India Services. Today Indian women have the right to vote, and they enjoy equal opportunities with men in political activities. In the economic sphere also women now enjoy various privileges. They have right to paternal property, and are allowed to choose any profession they like. They are likely to enjoy more privileges and opportunities in all spheres of life from the advent of the International Women's Year of 1975. (256 words)

15. What do you understand by the concept of "mixed economy" ? Give your arguments for and against its application in Indian economy. (WBCS '75)

Some economists regard the public and private sectors not as distinct entities but as complementary and parts of a single organisation. "Mixed economy" was supposed to combine the best of these two sectors with the dictates of social justice. It is true that a dynamic collaboration between the State sector and private enterprise would ensure adequate increased production which cannot be expected from a sole public sector or sole private sector.

The outlook of the framers of India's Five Year Plans is that while the public sector and the private sector should both develop, the former should grow at a faster pace than the latter. For the rapid industrialization of an under-developed country like India, the growth of a public sector in industry is absolutely essential since all-round economic development cannot be achieved merely by depending on the private initiative and its profit motive. Thus the Industrial Policy Statement of 1956 of the Government of India laid stress on the growth of a public sector in the spheres of industry and commerce. Under this policy, 17 Schedule-A key industries like arms & ammunition, iron & steel, heavy industries and machine-building industries were the exclusive responsibility of the State and 12 Schedule-B industries like non-ferrous metals, fertilizer, antibiotics, would be progressively State-owned. The remainder would be left to the private sector. This gave a clear idea to the private investors about their field of operation.

For the successful functioning of a mixed economy it is necessary that private enterprise should prepare itself to accept the discipline and control imposed upon it.

(257 words)

16. What is a "question bank"? Discuss its necessity as well as its method of working in the field of reform of examination system. (WBCS '75)

The authorities of Burdwan University have introduced a number of examination reforms to check malpractices in examinations. As regards the examination reforms at

the Under-Graduate level there would be eight examinations in three years instead of two examinations as held at present and the questions would be set in a non-traditional way by drawing selected questions from the Question Bank. These reforms were made effective in the case of students admitted in the first-year Arts, Science and Commerce (other than Honours) Class in the 1975-76 session.

Question Bank will be a Centre for deposit, storage and distribution of required questions to the constituent colleges. Model questions would be invited from affiliated colleges on a particular course of study covering the entire syllabus. These would be reviewed by the Under-Graduate Board of Studies before they are finally approved. Some 100 or 150 questions would be approved on each subject. These approved questions would again be sent back to those colleges and they would set question papers for the above eight Tests on the basis of or out of the approved questions obtained from the Bank.

The system would remove the grievances of the candidates that the questions were not upto their satisfaction or those were of confusing nature or were out of syllabus. The students, on the other hand, would have to prepare for all the model questions covering the entire syllabus and thus must be acquainted with the original books.

The other Universities are also examining the suitability of introducing this system. (253 words)

17. Elucidate Gandhiji's views on (a) Non-Violence and (b) Education. (CL '75)

Ans. (a) Non-Violence—was the basic principle of Gandhiji in settling all matters of dispute. He projected non-violence as a dynamic force which could be put to work for the ethical, social, economic and political uplift of the people. He believed that changes could be brought about by appealing to the nobler instincts in man instead of by using force or coercion for any purpose. Non-violence

did not mean resignation from all real fighting against wickedness but it intended to employ soul-force (instead of physical force) to resist wrong-doing, tyranny and injustice. It required moral strength and capacity for sacrifice of the highest order in achieving the object. It was a social virtue inasmuch as it can help regulate society. Economic equality can also be brought about through non-violence and persuasion by love. In the political sphere also, Gandhiji wanted India to reach her destiny through truth and non-violence. (147 words)

(b) Education, according to Gandhiji, must be of a new type for the sake of the creation of a new world. It is not literacy or learning which makes a man, but education for real life. He attached great importance to ethical education. True education must enable a person to control his senses and mind and contribute towards making life happy and honest. By education he meant a proper exercise and development of body, mind and spirit in a harmonious way. He held that true education should be imparted through mother tongue and it should reflect the national conditions of the country. The basic education should embrace pre-basic, post-basic and adult education with some fundamental religious education and should be such as to build up character. Craft, art, health and education should all be integrated into one scheme. Every handicraft should be taught not merely mechanically but scientifically so that the child may know the how and why of every process. (160 words)

18. What are Gandhiji's views on untouchability ?

What measures have been taken by the Government to eradicate untouchability ? (WBCS '76)

Ans. Gandhiji waged a life-long battle against the scourge of untouchability. He introduced the word *Harijan* (children of God) to describe the down-trodden section of Hindu Society, who were also called the Depressed Classes or the Untouchable. He launched the

famous Harijan Movement and succeeded in rousing the public conscience against such a monstrous social evil. It is not religion but social prejudice which is responsible for denying the untouchables several civil liberties like drawing water from a well, entering a temple or admission to a school. Gandhiji regarded the practice of untouchability as a relic of our past sins, which should be eradicated from every Hindu heart. He considered untouchability immoral and it mitigated against non-violence, freedom and equality. Gandhiji attached the greatest importance to the admission of Harijans to the temples of worship. He advised Harijans to improve their ways of living by giving up carrion eating, liquor drinking and gambling. As a result of the relentless campaign carried on by him, India's Constitution-makers declared the practice of untouchability illegal.

Thus under Article 17 of the Constitution 'Untouchability' is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. In 1955, the Parliament of India passed the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955 which laid down penalties for discrimination in any manner against a person who can be described as untouchable. The Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes looks after the interest of these Depressed Classes. The evil of untouchability has almost been eradicated from the society except some remnants still persisting among the die-hard conservatives.

(250 words)
